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MAY 9, 1921

"He being dead, yet speaketh."

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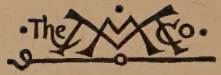
THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIAN UNITY



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(THE) PROBLEM OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

BY

VARIOUS WRITERS

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INTRODUCTION

The interest in Christian Unity has greatly increased during the last ten years. This is due to several causes, the chief one being the consciousness of the Churches that a divided Christendom does not witness to the unity that is in Christ and that a divided Church cannot accomplish the tasks that are everywhere challenging it. As a result of this conviction efforts are everywhere being made to remove those barriers that have for ages separated the many communions of the one Church and to find some basis for reunion on which all may achieve that oneness for which our Lord prayed.

It would be interesting to survey these efforts, and this has been done to some extent in the following chapters. They have found expression in two directions. There have been the various federations of churches in England, Switzerland, France and America, where the several denominations — in our own land over thirty — have united for the common achievement of common tasks. These federations have done much to prepare the way, for they have greatly increased the

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acquaintance of the denominations with one another, increased mutual respect, and revealed that the things held in common vastly outweigh the things that divide.

But it is with the organic unity of the Church that the world is more and more concerning itself. During the last ten years there have been more conferences on unity than in the previous fifty years. The various communions in America have established commissions on unity or on faith and order, and these commissions have been meeting frequently for conference. Representatives of the Anglican Church and the Free Churches have held frequent meetings in Great Britain. Out of these meetings in America and Great Britain has come the important World Conference on Faith and Order which met in Geneva during August, 1920. The Christian Unity Foundation of America has been holding frequent conferences between representatives of the Protestant Episcopal Church and representatives of other communions. Out of these various movements in America have come interesting suggestions for practical steps toward reunion, such as the famous Concordat proposed by certain Episcopalians and Congregationalists. The results of the discussions in England are seen in the remarkable steps forward taken in "An Appeal to all Christian People," issued by the recent Lambeth Confer-

ence. In America we have the "American Council on Organic Union," which is the outcome of the various movements in our country.

It is with this problem of organic reunion that this volume deals. Several of the most eminent leaders of the Churches have been persuaded to speak their minds frankly on the whole subject. Here one finds historic survey of the movement, the causes of disunion, the obstacles that lie in the way of unity, outstanding instances of reunion, especially as found in the mission fields, a survey of endeavors now being made, and suggestions for immediate steps. It is a remarkably suggestive and stimulating series of papers and perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of the whole subject of reunion that has yet appeared in America.

FREDERICK LYNCH.

New York,
December 6, 1920.

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THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

CAN A DIVIDED CHURCH MEET THE CHALLENGE OF THE PRESENT WORLD CRISIS?

By the Reverend S. Parkes Cadman, D.D., LL.D.

We all agree that the Church must become inwardly and outwardly, what her glorified Head intends her to be: that under no consideration should any of her children seek to modify the ideal which the New Testament presents concerning the authority and the mission of the Church as the guardian of the Gospel she is commissioned to proclaim to all nations. We further agree that the Church should be in every age a sufficient vehicle for the communication of God's saving grace to mankind, and that no views we hold concerning the loftiness and the vital necessity of her work, can exceed the realities therein involved. It is upon the common basis of these mutual agreements that I speak to the question, " Can a divided Church meet the challenge of the present

world crisis?". Speaking personally, I conceive of the Church in the words of St. Augustine, who averred that "If God was his Father, the Church was his Mother." According to the developments of doctrine in the Apostolic writings, she is the present Body and the future Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, the dwelling place in her spiritual unity of the Paraclete of God, the pillar and ground of the truth which St. Paul defines as saving truth, the one eternal institution in Time, which will survive all other institutions of Time. I see no reason why we should not cultivate the consciousness of her dignity and power which has its warrant in the teachings of Holy Scripture. Our ascription of ultimate holiness and catholicity to the Church, is the statement in language familiar to Christian men and women, of Professor Huxley's prediction that the only rational goal for the continuous progress of the race is an ultimate perfectibility. Surely we know, if we know anything at all, that Christian history and Christian experience point to the triumph of the Church as consisting in this perfectibility. There is, however, a lamentable indefiniteness in our interpretation of the essential nature and meaning of the Church which will have to be removed if the unity of which the Bishop has so ably spoken is to obtain. I need not remind you that both Protestantism and Catholicism are on trial, and if

they are to emerge purified and strengthened from the tests imposed upon them, all faithful lovers of the Master will have to discern in the Church the entire congregation of souls re-born, gathered out of every nation, fused into spiritual homogeneity, animated by the indwelling life of the Spirit, broadly and securely founded upon the Person, the Work, the Priesthood and the Reign of Jesus Christ. That is the real catholicity which sees in the past, the present, and the future of the Ecclesia the outworking of one Divine Design, slowly appearing from beneath the wear and waste of human agencies. Such a catholicity esteems the Church capable of universal service, sacrifice, loyalty, and holds that she will grow up into her Living Head in all things, fulfilling every religious obligation and responding to every just social demand. The breach between these conceptions and our actual conditions is indeed wide, but can we not span it with our faith, hope and charity? There will be a day when the various flocks will be gathered into one fold, under one Shepherd. Hence, we should be chary about establishing our own altars and covenants, and be more intent upon making the Church the *alter ego* of her Lord than upon the sectional interests which have too often monopolized our thought and energy. She is the priestess of the world, offering for the world the homage it frequently forgets to offer for itself,

pledged to its service, and to sacrifice in its behalf.

No one who understands denominationalism will speak harshly of its past. Its respective forms and organizations have endeared themselves to the servants of God because of their immemorial associations in righteous causes and their notable contributions to the evangelization of mankind. The quiet devotion of the Friend, the intellectual integrity of the Calvinistic churches, the liberty loving propensities of the Puritan churches, the Apostolic zeal of the spiritual children of the Evangelical Movement of the eighteenth century, the educational processes of Lutheranism, and the reverent and worshipful characteristics of Anglicanism have alike enriched and hallowed the praise of the sanctuary, and fostered the growth and the benefits of our common Faith. Yet until recently, separative factors have had a period of unrestrained eulogy in which historical accuracy and judicial fairness have occasionally suffered. At the summit of their sway, those factors did not capture the world to which they were so sedulously presented. Nationalism has proved sufficiently strong to crush an artificial over-balance of destructive imperialism. Nevertheless, far-visioned statesmen are not convinced that nationalism is the final goal of Christian civilization. In like manner, Protestantism has redressed ancient wrongs in the Church,

colonized States, kept faith with Biblical teaching, restored preaching to its Apostolic honor, and been the companion and the conscience of much civil and religious liberty. But the passion for doctrinal systems and exclusive creeds which raged with uncontrollable force for the past four hundred years has divided the empire of Protestantism. Her doctors seemed to agree on little except that there could be no such thing as an open question among Christian men. The quarrels of these dogmatists, which absorbed their minds, are short-lived and unimportant when viewed in the light of the eternal cosmos which is being built up by every Christ-like interest of mankind. Their historic separatisms have ceased to charm. Enlightened spirits, weary of arid controversies, feel that the matters about which those controversies centered are as dust in the balances when compared with the glorious truths upon which all Protestants are agreed. In the meantime the relationships of nations in literature, in art, in science, in commerce, in things conducive to their welfare, and also, things conducive to their disaster, have become more intimate, responsive, and complicated. This evolution of human life begets in those who mark its unfoldings the virtue of tolerance; the knowledge of it cultivates the historic perspectives which shape the informed Christian's verdict, without

which he magnifies the trivial, slights the important, and may inflame the antagonistic elements of society. We are confronted in our sectarian affinities with the gigantic problem of running order through chaos, discipline through freedom, unity through multiplicity. This problem has always been, and perhaps always will be, the test of the Divine Society; the moral, not alone of Religion, but of every undertaking and economy of life. Multitudes of earnest and seeking individuals are inquiring why it is that Protestantism, the great architect of free and moralized communities, cannot find a solvent for the standing riddle of freedom with obedience, and place against the overweening claims of political states the claims of the Moral Sovereign of the Universe. Evidently sectarianism has seen its meridian, and if it be true that nations must agree or perish, it is almost more true that denominations must do likewise or meet the same end. Such affirmations are of course conditioned by the undetermined values of twentieth century thought, but a forecast for the Church compels the conclusion that her growing desire for unity must be nourished by prayer, by discourse, by a submission of our deepest wishes to the guidance of the Eternal will. Should the Church refuse to deal candidly with this laudable instinct for oneness, which I believe is the fruit of the Spirit, the

Lord of all ages may again assert His supremacy as He did in the sixteenth century, or in even more surprising ways than those experienced in that great upheaval. The fate that has doomed States which nursed disruptions will not spare churches that set the part above the whole, heedless of the signs of the times. The world refuses to be either Romanized or Protestantized. It demands that Christian organizations forsake a hollow and transient truce, and arrive at an equitable and a settled peace. We cannot forever be disputing the exact origins of the streams at which men quench their spiritual thirst. It is our chief duty to replenish them in order that they may irrigate larger areas. Union would give us a working basis from which to attack the iniquities that have agreed while churchmen have wrangled. It would neutralize the sharpness of the controversial spirit by the forbearance of the fraternal spirit. It would call a halt upon the hosts of non-church-going nominal Protestants who in their manner of living are sometimes actual pagans, who acknowledge no religious control, and resent the preacher's attempt to regulate life by the austere standards of the New Testament. I need say nothing about the waste of means and men, the overlapping and the mutual weakenings, which sectarianism has involved. These losses are before us all, and their bearing

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upon the efficiency of the ministry in the near future weighs heavily upon hearts of those who love the Kingdom of God supremely. They recognize that the function of the Gospel and of the ministry is not sectarian, nor national, nor even international, but supernational, as every advocate of Christ in non-Christian lands can testify.

Of course the pulpit has a premier place in Protestantism, but the intellectual vigor which should have been consecrated to its great office has not been available in the last decades. Nor is it a harsh criticism to say that it was not intended for the life of the Church to find its only outlet in sermons. No single method of transmission, however venerable and blessed, exhausts the possibilities of the Evangel. Unity will not be well begun in preaching any more than in theology. But it is already existent in worship, in the symbolism and the hymnology that express the spiritual aspirations of the worshipers. The mystical blending of things seen and unseen in the Christian system instructs us that the Awful Being raised above the sphere of sense is not beyond the reach of sensory perceptions. The Incarnation pierced the vail, and caused St. John to rejoice over what the eyes of the first disciples had seen, and their hands had handled, even the Word of Life. The state is lavish in symbol-

ism. It garlands its streets, and greets its heroes, and utilizes every available appeal which impresses the public imagination with the majesty of the nation. What have we done in our hole-and-corner sectarianism to exalt the Eternal Conqueror returning from the battle with sin and death in solitary triumph? I admire the Salvation Army for displaying its banners and uniforms on the streets, for its decisive efforts to make our Faith known to the casual passer-by. Denominations, creeds, theologies, sermons, propaganda, exist for the Church, not the Church for them; and churches exist, not solely for the edification of believers, still less for the display of erudition or of eloquence, but that the life of God in Christ Jesus shall be quickened and developed in them; diffused abroad through them by every method Christ has sanctioned, and every avenue of spiritual approach and influence Christian history has approved. We do not expect the unification of Protestantism to mature in a brief period. It is wiser to let so noble a cause develop in the way, such causes usually take. It may require half a millennium to repair the breaches in the walls of the City of God. But it is our inestimable privilege to plead for its benefits, and to observe its genesis. The undertaking will entail a more resolute faith, a rarer devotion, a diviner love, than we possess. That these are already leavening the

churches I humbly believe, and I foresee the Church of the future as a corporate whole, elastic enough to accommodate difference in non-essentials, with a simple but catholic doctrine, a common worship, a mission which has no boundaries in a world which the Lord of all has Redeemed.

STEPS TOWARD ORGANIC UNITY: THE PRESENT SITUATION

By the Right Rev. Thomas J. Garland D.D., D.C.L.

The great schism between the East and West may be dated from 867 A. D. when it began, or 1054 when it was practically completed. During the following centuries many attempts at reunion were made, but the fall of Constantinople in 1452 brought all negotiations to an end. In England, the Reformation made great changes: definite schism there may be placed about 1574 when the Roman Catholics were ordered to withdraw from the communion of the Church. With the political disorder and intellectual renaissance of the Middle Ages, we are not surprised that in the unrestricted use of the right of an ecclesiastical self-determination, disorder manifested itself by separation into many religious bodies. The unity of the Church was broken; new standards of faith, new conceptions of the Ministry of the sacraments, and of the government of the Church were promulgated. It is true that thoughtful men in all churches realized the danger of such a trend,

and after the rise of the Puritans, many attempts at reunion were made in England as well as on the continent. In the latter many prominent Protestants and Roman Catholics took part (e.g., Grotius, who first attempted to get a union of all Protestant bodies and later considered reunion with Rome), also the philosopher, Leibnitz. On the Roman side were such men as Bishop Bossuet and Bishop Spinola. An interesting article on Bossuet's correspondence with Leibnitz was published in the *Constructive Quarterly* of last December.

Many references have been made to the effort to restore the Episcopate to Scotland in 1610, but it should be added that in 1661 an appeal was made to England for the reëstablishment of the Episcopal Succession.

During the 18th century, Reunion was little thought of — in fact, in England there was witnessed the largest and most needless separation, in the case of the Methodists,— who in a spiritually unsympathetic age, were practically driven out of the Church of England.

About the middle of the 19th century, Reunion was for the first time officially brought to the attention of the Episcopal Church in the United States in a memorial to the General Convention of 1853. Finally in 1886, the *Quadrilateral* was adopted. As slightly altered at the

Lambeth Conference, the articles were as follows:

a. The Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments as "containing all things necessary to salvation" and as being the true and ultimate standard of Faith.

b. The Apostles' Creed as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith.

c. The two sacraments ordained by Christ himself — Baptism and the Supper of the Lord — ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.

d. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and people called of God into the unity of His Church.

This may be largely regarded as the beginning of the modern movement. One has only to mention the Evangelical Alliance, the Bonn Conferences, the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, the Commission on Faith and Order, the Free Church Alliance, etc., to illustrate the fact that in recent years, Reunion has been one of the chief topics in the Christian world. This movement has crystallized into conferences between representatives of various churches in Russia, in China, in Japan, in Australia, in Africa, in England, in Canada, as well as in the United States.

The fact is that every intelligent man, what-

ever his opinion may be, must concede that *he cannot defend division.* In the last few years, since the beginning of the World War, there has been a growing demand for democracy — for the manifestation of human brotherhood. A divided Church cannot lead this movement, yet the Church must lead it or Socialism will. If, as we believe, Christ is the center of unity, then those who believe in Him must make His Church the inspiration, the leader and the center of human brotherhood.

The missionary awakening of the Church and the union of democratic nations in the War, the ministrations of chaplains to men of every religious communion, receiving them into the membership of their respective churches, have done much to break down barriers and to promote the "will of unity."

To refer again briefly to the history of the past, it might be said that in the early Church, schism and heresy had reference chiefly to doctrine and not order.

In the middle ages, the main objections of the Puritans and others in England and Scotland were to the State Constitution of the Church and not *primarily to Episcopacy or Doctrine.* A clear statement of this fact may be found in the words of the late Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Very Rev. Dr. Cooper, who

writes: "When Episcopacy was discarded in Scotland it was due to the intrusion of the civil power rather than any strong difference of principle"; "Episcopacy had become hopelessly Erastian."

In these modern days, the objections are chiefly centered in differences as to government and order.

During the last ten years, the leaders of the Church, like Gaul, have been divided into three parts:

The first believed that we should seek Reunion with those who are our kith and kin — the Protestant churches which dominate Anglo-Saxon Christendom.

The second, though willing to confer with all, thought that no real effort toward Reunion should be made until the Roman and Eastern Churches were ready to agree on terms.

The third took no interest in the matter.

The second party is now negligible. The War has changed some of its adherents into earnest advocates for Reunion with Protestant bodies.

The third party is also growing numerically smaller and on all sides there seems to be a desire for Organic Union, though there are still some who believe that an alliance or federation is all that is possible or desirable.

Five important conferences should be consid-

ered in this paper — in Canada, Australia, South Africa, England and in the United States.

Canada

From 1899 to 1903 preliminary conferences were held looking toward organic union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches. These crystallized in 1909 and 1910, and a definite attempt was made to seek the approval of the governing bodies and the members of the respective churches on a proposed Basis of Union for the United Church of Canada. About sixty-five per cent. of the members of the Presbyterian Church voted in favor of the project.

In the Methodist and Congregational Churches, over eighty per cent. were favorable. The latter bodies were in favor of proceeding but the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church decided that it was unwise to consummate the union with such a large minority unconvinced, and hoped that further conference and discussion might bring unanimous action.

In December, 1914, representatives of the three Churches agreed upon an amended basis of union which included twenty articles of doctrine. The statement issued by the Presbyterian contains the following summary of reasons for the union.

a. the conditions of our newer West.

b. the weakened state of rural churches in older Canada.
c. the social disorders of city slums.
d. the problem of the foreigner.
e. the needs of the heathen world.

As far back as 1906 the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England in Canada, were requested to appoint a Committee to participate in the discussions, but, though the reply was cordial and a special committee was appointed, the Committee on Church Union of the General Synod did not appoint a Committee to confer with them. It is probable that they felt that the time had not yet come to sufficiently extend the proposed Basis of Union to meet the views of the Church of England in Canada.

In Australia

The movement towards unity in Australia, though inaugurated after that of Canada, is of greater importance as it afforded a more tangible basis for Organic Union, and was the first definite effort to bring to the attention of the Christian world a possible plan for its consummation on the basis of the Quadrilateral. Though full of difficulties, it was approached by Anglicans and Presbyterians with an honest and prayerful desire to recognize all essentials, and to reconcile, as

far as possible, all differences and non-essentials. After several years' consideration, in 1906–7 resolutions were agreed upon practically adopting the Quadrilateral with some modifications of No. 4, and containing, among others, the following statements:

9. We recognize that up to the period of the Reformation there was one common succession of Orders, and that, since that time, the practice of Ordination has been continued, and the Act of Ordination has been performed (a) in the Anglican Church by a Bishop and Presbyters, (b) in the Presbyterian Church by a Presbytery presided over by a Moderator.

10. That a union of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania and the Presbyterian Church of Australia be effected and consummated by a joint Solemn Act under the Authority and sanction of both Churches, in which each Church shall confer upon the Presbyters of the other all the rights and privileges necessary for the exercise of their office in the United Church, so that from the moment of such Union, all the Presbyters of each Church shall have equal status in the United Church.

These resolutions were approved by the Committees of Conferences of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Australia,

and also by the Methodist Church, excepting article ten, providing for the reciprocal conferring of authority and sanction.

There is no use, however, in minimizing the fact that though not confessedly insuperable, the negotiations did not evolve a solution of the problem of a satisfactory recognition of orders in all churches.

The influence of these conferences, however, was specially noticeable in our own country. In March, 1913, at a conference of the Christian Unity Foundation, representatives of the Episcopal Church and of the Disciples of Christ, expressed sympathy with the general purpose of the movement. Two months later, similar resolutions were passed at a conference held by the Christian Unity Foundation, with representatives of the Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist Churches.

To briefly review up to this point, we have seen that though the modern movement was formally launched in America through the adoption of the Quadrilateral, it was in Canada, Australia and Africa that the most definite and concrete attempts were made to solve the problem of our differences. So again, during the stress of war, it was from England that we received the most noticeable contribution of progress.

As a result of the preliminary conference of

representatives of the Anglican and Free Church Commissions on Faith and Order, a sub-committee was appointed which unanimously agreed on two reports. I want to refer specially to the second interim report which aroused great interest, and which has been widely discussed on both sides of the Atlantic.

The report is based on two convictions; first, that unity is essential to the purpose of Christ for His Church, and for its effective witness and work in the world. Second, that the abstract discussion of the origin of Episcopacy historically, and its authority doctrinally, should be discussed at the conference in an atmosphere congenial, not to controversy, but to agreement. The report then states some conditions of any possibility of Reunion, from which I briefly quote:

1. That continuity with the Historic Episcopate should be effectively preserved.

2. That in order that the rights and responsibilities of the whole Christian community in the government of the Church may be adequately recognized, the Episcopate should re-assume a constitutional form, both as regards the method of the election of the bishops as by clergy and people, and the method of government after election. It is perhaps necessary that we should call to mind that such was the primitive ideal and practice of Episcopacy, and it so remains in many

Episcopal Communions to-day, (e. g., in the United States).

3. That acceptance of the *fact* of Episcopacy and not any *theory* as to its character should be all that is asked for. We think that this may be the more easily taken for granted as the acceptance of any such theory is not now required of ministers of the Church of England. It would no doubt be necessary, before any arrangements for corporate reunion could be made, to discuss the exact functions which it may be agreed to recognize as belonging to the Episcopate; but we think this can be left to the future.

It is significant that, though many denounced the report, the leaders welcomed it. The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, preaching in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral, endorsed it warmly, and said: "I take it for granted that we shall accept the fact of Episcopacy," and "effectively preserve the continuity of the historical Episcopate." (Dr. Cooper.)

For the most recent development the pendulum has again swung, and in America, we have two movements to record. First in importance, the action of the Presbyterian Church in the adoption in 1918 of the overture of Organic Union. The first meeting of the committee was held in Philadelphia in December of the same year, and was attended by representatives of seventeen leading

Protestant Churches. It was unanimously decided that the time had come when definite steps should be taken. An ad interim committee was appointed to carry forward the movement towards Organic Union, and to prepare a suggested plan. This committee held many meetings and discussed several plans, some of which provided for organic union, and others for a federation under a central governing body with special authority in matters of education, and of missionary interests. The final draft of the report was submitted in Philadelphia about ten days ago, and may be called a Plan for Federal Union. The committee emphasized the following features in presenting its report:

(a) That it is in the nature of a federal union in that the constituent churches coöperate in the furtherance of Christ's redemptive work in the world through an independent body by which their various joint activities are mediated.

(b) That it is an organic union in that it has the vital principle of growth and development; that the Council had definite functions and duties, and that these functions and duties may from time to time be developed in like manner as the functions of our federal government in the United States of America may, from time to time, by Constitutional Amendment, be modified or enlarged.

There were about one hundred and fifty dele-

gates present at this conference, and all were of one mind in desiring that some definite step should be taken, though many expressed the opinion that the plan submitted did not provide for a real organic union. The Committee, however, evidently considered it as a first step, as it stated in its report: "After it shall have been in operation for a term of years, the importance of divisive names and creeds and methods will pass more and more into the dim background of the past, and acquire, even in the particular denomination itself, a merely historical value, and that the churches then will be ready for, and will demand, a more complete union; so that what was the United Churches of Christ in America, can become the United Church of Christian America, a real ecclesiastical entity, with ecclesiastical powers, holding and administering ecclesiastical property and funds of such united church."

I will conclude my historical references with the mention of the proposal for an approach towards unity between the Episcopal and Congregational Churches, generally spoken of as the Concordat. The object of this is to give Epsicopal ordination to Congregational Ministers as a practical approach to visible unity. It was sympathetically considered in General Convention, and an official commission was appointed to continue conferences with Congregationalists and re-

port to the next convention, expressing the hope that action would then be initiated to provide for the proper canonical changes to put into effect the recommendations of the commission.

Looking back on the fruits of the modern movements, we may mention as some of its results:

That Union of the Congregational and Dutch Reformed Churches in South India; of the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland; of eleven of the Lutheran bodies in the United States; and the agreement made last month between the Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Episcopal Church South. We may also mention the establishment of colleges of divinity representing all the leading churches in Australia and in Canada. I will not attempt to refer to the Oxford Conferences of the past few years, or to the Kingsway Conference, or to show how much the cause of unity has been promoted by our leading church papers and magazines. I think, however, a special tribute should be paid to the *Christian Union Quarterly* and the *Constructive Quarterly*.

After this historical review, may I be permitted to add a few personal thoughts? The aim of the last Oxford Conference was expressed as "not *merely to promote but to secure Reunion!*" That, it seems to me, should be our motto. In

the Oxford Conference of last year, there are two significant statements which I quote:

"We are in entire accord in our mutual Recognition of the Communions to which we belong as Christian Churches, Members of the One body of Christ; and we record our judgment that this recognition is fundamental for any approach towards the realization of that Reunited Church, for which we long and labor and pray."

"We recognize, with the Sub-Committee of Faith and Order, in its Second Interim Report, the place which a reformed Episcopacy must hold in the ultimate Constitution of the Re-united Church — and we do not doubt that the Spirit of God will lead the Churches of Christ, if resolved on Re-union, to such a Constitution as will also fully conserve the essential value of the other historical types of Church Polity, Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist."

I believe that all the divisions since the Reformation have been a struggle for some principle that separatists conscientiously felt was being ignored. *But the reasons for such divisions no longer exist.*

Every person receiving baptism is made a member of Christ's Church which is His body. As all baptized are equally members of the body, there is no need for Reunion in this sense.

The fourth article of the Quadrilateral has been generally considered the crux of the problem. May I suggest that instead of approaching this article as a desire to claim exclusive authority, we should look at it from the other standpoint. There are many who believe that Episcopacy is a safeguard for catholicity and for the required transmission of the historic ministry, but they do not claim this as their exclusive right, but as holding it in trust for all who equally with them belong to the Body of Christ, and whom they recognize as members of Christ's Church. The desire is not absorption, but to give to all ministers the same unquestioned rights and privileges in the Church of Christ. It is manifest that in our country, if there was an organic union between any of the large Protestant bodies, say the Presbyterian and the Episcopal, when one Ministry was equally recognized by all, the former Episcopalians would be in a hopeless minority.

Therefore, I maintain that in considering this article, we should not interpret it as a special claim for power and authority, but as a special privilege and trust held by members of the Church, not for themselves, but to be communicated to the whole body for the benefit of all.

The most vital question before the Christian Church is that of Organic Union. For years we have thought, prayed, and talked about it; now it

is forced home upon our hearts and consciences for solution. Nations have united in a struggle for democracy and humanity, and without such union victory could not have been won. As Christians we believe in one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all; we sing "we are not divided, all one body we," yet we *are* divided and know in our hearts that until united we cannot win the victory over the forces of evil. Will the compulsive power of our common faith and common purpose bring a union of Christian forces?

I believe the time is ripe for action. The evils caused by unnecessary competition, the economic waste of men and money, the failure of a divided Christendom to impress or convert the world; the desire to answer the Master's prayer "That they all may be one"— all demand immediate action. In this age of reconstruction, it is my profound conviction that God is calling us to follow the guidance of the Spirit to unity, that He may make the new world wherein dwelleth Righteousness. The hour has struck: if we fail to hear God's call, it will be another case of the rejection of the Olive Tree. The call comes specially to us in America. We have not inherited the prejudices of the past, or the connection between Church and State — our Church governments are representative and democratic, and we have in

our country representatives of all the Churches in Christendom.

Therefore, let us prepare to take the next step — believing that if we agree on the essentials of the Faith, the details that must follow may be safely left to the guidance of the Spirit of God, manifested in the council of a united Church.

The steps taken in the past fifteen years have clearly manifested an unsuspected agreement in the essentials of the faith,— the historical investigation of our differences have shown that there is no valid reason to-day for our continued separation; in all our Churches there is a growing "will to unity." The present situation in the world's crises demands that we nail our colors to the mast, arouse the members of our respective churches, and resolve "*not merely to promote, but to secure reunion.*"

CAUSES LEADING UP TO DISUNITY

By the Rt. Rev. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, D.D., LL.D.

I have been asked to speak to-day upon a purely historical theme — the Causes that have led to Disunity. I shall try to be as objective as possible and shall refrain altogether, if I can, from passing judgment upon the right or the wrong of the issues involved.

The divisions that have distracted Christendom are legion. The causes leading up to them are almost as numerous and various. Of course it is quite out of the question, in the brief time at my disposal, to attempt to deal with all the divisions or with any large proportion of them. I shall therefore select only a few of the more important and significant in the hope that in studying them we may discover at least the principal causes that have brought about disunity in Christendom.

The first great division in the Christian Church arose in the second century as a result of the Gnostic controversy. That division was but temporary; it lasted only a few centuries. But it was one of the most significant the Church has

seen. Principles emerged at the time which have been dominant in the Catholic Church, both East and West, from that day to this.

I cannot stop, of course, to discuss Gnosticism in detail. I simply remind you that the Gnostics were Christian philosophers whose philosophy was dualistic in its fundamental aspects. They found warrant for the belief that they could legitimately teach their philosophy within the Christion Church in Paul's dualism between flesh and spirit and in his doctrine of redemption from the flesh. But their dualism was much more radical and thoroughgoing than Paul's and it led them to positions, many of which he could not have approved. For instance, it led them to deny that this world was created by God and is under his governance. This denial resulted in the rejection of divine providence, which Jesus made so much of and which has been so dear to the Christian heart of all generations. If this world is not God's world, divine providence is not operative within it. Rejecting divine creation and providence the Gnostics were obliged also to reject the Old Testament which teaches them both. But the Old Testament was the only Bible of the Christians of that day and from it they were in the habit of drawing their strongest arguments for the divine origin of Christianity and the divine mission of Jesus Christ. Again, it was

impossible for the Gnostics to believe that Jesus Christ, a divine spirit, had become incarnate in human flesh and was thus intimately bound up with this evil humanity of ours, and so they denied altogether the reality of Christ's earthly life. They repudiated also the resurrection of the flesh; salvation meant to them as to Paul, escape from the flesh, not the salvation of the flesh. But to most Christians the resurrection of the flesh was the only guarantee of the reality of a future life. Immortality is impossible, so they felt, unless this body of ours is raised again. Finally Marcion, who was closely connected with the Gnostics and was commonly identified with them, rejected altogether the belief in divine judgment. According to him the supreme God, the father of Christ, is a God of pure love and mercy and never judges or passes condemnation upon any one. But the future judgment, with its rewards and punishments to follow, was the chief reason in the minds of most Christians of that day for living righteously.

It is evident that the Christian faith was seriously threatened by the teaching of these men, and could not long survive in the form in which it had been handed down from the first century if their views were to prevail. As a consequence Christian theologians of the second century entered into controversy with them endeavoring to

prove them wrong. The Gnostics, however, were the ablest Christian thinkers of the day and it was not easy to bring the controversy to a successful issue.

In the beginning Christians had trusted the living Spirit to bring them to a knowledge of the truth, but their early confidence now gave way to fear and the leaders of the Church felt themselves impelled to hark back to the original deposit of the faith and to insist that all the truth God has to reveal to men was given through the Apostles, the messengers of Jesus Christ. If you, wish therefore to know the truth unto salvation, you must go back to them. But as a matter of fact, the Gnostics could trace and did trace certain of their views to the Apostle Paul, and some of them claimed oral traditions handed down from others of the Apostles as authority for their teachings. Their opponents were consequently compelled to delimit the teaching of the Apostles more carefully and we soon find Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, claiming that the Apostles had set forth saving truth in certain books which together constituted an apostolic canon, our canon of the New Testament. This too in one or another form the Gnostics were quite willing to accept. They were adepts in the art of allegorical interpretation and they had no difficulty in reading their doctrines into the New Testament. It therefore became

necessary to find a still more definite standard, and this Irenæus found in a form of words which he claimed had come down from the Apostles and which constitutes the original of our so-called Apostles' Creed. If then you would know what the Apostles taught you must turn first of all to the creed. But again the Gnostics retorted that the apostolic origin of the creed was doubtful, and in any case the creed itself could be read if necessary in such a way as not to exclude their views. As a consequence a third step was taken of the very greatest significance. It was claimed that the teachings of the Apostles had been handed down by their successors, the bishops, and that if you wish to know what the teaching of the Apostles is, if you wish to know what the true interpretation of the Scriptures is, if you wish to know what the creed is, you must interrogate these apostolic bishops. Let me quote a passage or two by way of illustration. "When they are refuted from the Scriptures, they accuse these same Scriptures as if they were not correct or authoritative and declare that they are ambiguous and that it is impossible for those who are ignorant of tradition to learn the truth from them. For they maintain that the truth was handed down not in writing but by word of mouth. . . . But again when we recall them to that tradition which come from the Apostles and is preserved in the churches by

the succession of elders, they turn against tradition saying that they themselves are wiser not only than the presbyters but also than the Apostles and have found the real truth. . . . It comes therefore to this that they now consent neither to the Scriptures nor to tradition. It is with such persons, my friend, that we have to contend, persons who endeavor to escape like slippery serpents anywhere they can. We must therefore oppose them in every way that if possible we may confound some of them and bring them to a knowledge of the truth. For though it is not easy for a soul steeped in error to repent, nevertheless it is not wholly impossible to escape error when the truth is set in contrast with it. Thus it is within the power of all in every Church who may wish to know the truth, to discover the tradition of the Apostles manifested in all the world; and we are able to enumerate those who by the Apostles were appointed bishops in the churches and to trace their succession down to our own time. They neither taught nor knew any such things as these persons rave about." (Irenæus, *Adversus Hereses,* III, 2 f.) "Wherefore we must obey the elders who are in the Church, those as we have shown who are the successors of the Apostles and who, together with the succession of the episcopate have received the sure gift of truth accord-

ing to the pleasure of the Father." (*Ibid* IV. 26, 2.)

This was quite conclusive. With a living authority it is possible to determine beyond all cavil what Christian truth really is. Ecclesiastical councils in which the collective episcopate speaks, and thus the scandal of divergent infallibilities is overcome, followed as a matter of course.

In the meantime there arose almost simultaneously a controversy over the question of forgiveness. There were those in the earliest days who thought that no person who had sinned after baptism and been excluded from the communion of the faithful, should be received again into the Church. He must be left on the contrary to the uncovenanted mercies of God. But as time passed opinion grew increasingly lenient upon the matter, and particularly under the stress of the Montanistic controversy the leaders of the Church were driven to a more moderate position which found voice first in the decree of Bishop Callixtus of Rome in the early part of the third century. The significant thing about the degree is that Callixtus claimed he had the right as successor of the Apostles to forgive and readmit to communion those who had sinned after baptism and had been excluded from the Church. The belief, thus expressed, together with the other belief in

episcopal infallibility, was formulated by the great Cyprian in the middle of the third century as a part of the Catholic theory of the Church. According to that theory no one can be saved unless he agrees with the apostolic bishop in matters of faith: the heretic will be lost. According to that theory also no one can be saved unless he is in communion with the apostolic bishops, who have grace not only to interpret truth but also to forgive sin, and consequently the schismatic too will be lost. The theory was some time in building, but in its essential features it is as old as the second century, and it has remained the theory of the Catholic Church down to the present day.

Of course where this twofold theory prevails, it is a relatively simple matter to keep the faith pure and the Church intact. Here and there may be a man or group of men who will break away, but as long as the theory is maintained unbroken the Church as a whole is bound indissolubly together. Upon the basis of the theory judgment was passed now and again upon this and that heretic or rebel, and he was excluded from the Catholic Church, the sole ark of salvation. But though the seamless robe of Christ was repeatedly rent as Arians, Apollinarians, Donatists, Pelagians and the like were condemned and excommunicated, they passed away one after another, and the great Catholic Church lived on secure with

its infallible interpreter of truth and its sole mediator of saving grace, the apostolic episcopate, chief fruit of the Gnostic controversy.

Another division to which I wish to refer was due to altogether different causes. I mean the division between East and West which culminated in the year 1054. Both East and West alike stood upon the Catholic principle that was formulated as a result of the Gnostic controversy. They both believed heresy and schism to be fatal and they both applied the same criteria in determining heresy and schism. But political differences led to a separation between them and split the Church into two halves. The division of the empire in Diocletian's time, the building of Constantinople as the second capital by Constantine, the growing self-consciousness of the eastern part of the empire, the growing rivalry of the Roman and Constantinopolitan patriarchs, the diverse political and economic interests of East and West all led to increasing estrangement between the eastern world with its capital at Constantinople and the western world with its capital at Rome. And not only such differences as these but also the claim of the Roman Bishop that he was Primate of the world and supreme head of the Church in East as well as West promoted the estrangement. Had the Bishop of Rome been content to remain the patriarch of the West, as all acknowledged him to

be, the division might have been avoided. But instead it grew apace and in the eleventh century became permanent. In order then to justify the division on Catholic principles, in order, in other words, to give it a doctrinal basis and enable each Church to claim that it was alone the true apostolic Church of Christ, appeal was made to a wholly unimportant difference in the text of the common creed — the so-called Nicene creed — as used respectively in East and West. In the West there had been added more or less inadvertently the phrase *filioque,* so that the Holy Spirit was said to have proceeded from the Father and the Son instead of from the Father alone as in the original text. This addition was made the dogmatic basis for the pronouncement on the part of the Eastern Church that the westerners were heretics. But it would be a grave mistake to suppose that the difference in the form of the creed was the cause of the schism or that certain liturgical differences were the cause as is often said. It would have been easy to compose all such differences had it not been for the political issues that lay back of them. The dogmatic and liturgical differences in fact were insisted on only as a justification of a division already complete on other grounds.

The schism between East and West reminds us of other and more recent schisms in which political

interests have been controlling. For instance we have churches in this country that are divided one from another simply because they have come from different countries across the sea, as the Presbyterians from Scotland and the Reformed from Holland. Similarly, as a result of the Civil War, there are churches in the North still divided from churches in the South with which they were formerly one, the original reason for the division being purely political.

The third great division to which I wish to call attention is that between Catholics and Protestants. The causes of the Protestant Reformation were extraordinarily complex and were different in different countries, and different with different groups of men. With Luther himself the controlling interest was without question religious. His gospel of the forgiving love of God in Christ, precious to him as a result of years of experience, led him to interpret salvation as a free gift of God and as a present and not merely a future reality. He might have believed thus and yet not have broken with the Roman Church. But from the belief he drew consequences touching the Church and the hierarchy and the life of the Christian which proved offensive and intolerable to the Catholic authorities. The significant thing is that when as a consequence he was excommunicated, he did not remain a lone

heretic but took with him into a new church or group of churches large multitudes of Christians of the Western world. They were moved by all sorts of interests; some of them by religious interests as he was; others by economic, political or cultural interests. Not a few humanists went with him because they thought that in the new system learning would be advanced, though they soon discovered their mistake; the peasants thought their economic situation would be improved, though they too were deceived; and many princes joined the movement for the sake of political advantages.

Whatever their controlling interests, the break was made possible only because Luther succeeded in convincing multitudes of his fellow Christians that they might be saved apart from the Catholic Church and its hierarchy. The moment they were convinced of this, many of them, eager for a long time to abandon the old system on one or another ground, went with him and Protestantism became an established fact. In leaving the Catholic Church Luther repudiated the twofold principle dominant in Catholicism ever since the third century, both East and West,— the infallible authority of the Catholic Church, speaking through its bishops, and the impossibility of salvation apart from them.

For a time he was content to do without any

definite authority beyond his doctrine of the forgiving love of God in Christ. That seemed to him adequate for every emergency. But gradually, under the pressure of the radicals on the one side and of the conservatives on the other, he was led to identify his gospel of the forgiving love of God in Christ, which he had always called the word of God, with the Scriptures, and to find in them the ultimate authority for Christian truth. In other words he selected one of the three authorities appealed to originally against the Gnostics, centering attention upon it and making it final. The Catholics, of course, had never questioned the authority of the Scriptures but had only supplemented it by the authority of an infallible Church or episcopate. In rejecting the infallible Church and episcopate while retaining an infallible Bible Protestantism broke in part, but only in part, with the old Catholic system.

As a consequence of the break not only was western Christendom divided into two hostile camps, Roman Catholic and Protestant, but the Protestants themselves were speedily split up into many warring sects. The belief that truth without which men cannot be saved has been infallibly revealed,— that belief, if there be an infallible interpreter, may not lead to disunity. On the contrary, it may lead to the closest kind of union. But when faith in the infallibility of the inter-

preter vanishes and every man is left to interpret the truth for himself as best he can, divisions are bound to multiply, and it is no accident that Protestantism broke almost immediately into various groups each claiming to be in sole possession of the truth. It is evident that the cause of these divisions was the belief in infallible truth, which must be known for salvation, with the checks upon that belief removed. If a man must have this truth in order to be saved, and if he can get it only from the Scriptures, he is bound to think some Scripture truth essential which others do not and to set that up as the basis of a new sect. As long as there was an infallible interpreter trusted by all, division was unnecessary. And even when the infallibility of the interpreter was less than certain, as long as salvation was to be had only within a particular institution, it was a serious thing to break with it, too serious a thing for most Christians to venture. When both these checks were removed and Christians began to believe that the Catholic Church was neither infallible nor the sole ark of salvation, the break followed as a matter of course. And the multitudinous divisions within Protestantism was inevitable. Everywhere an infallible revelation was assumed, the acceptance of which was necessary to salvation, and everywhere there was disagreement as to just what that revelation contained. While

the Roman Catholic Church was in sole possession, heresy with its resulting condemnation and excommunication was too dangerous to be lightly faced, but in the new situation to pass from one church to another or to start a new church of one's own was the easiest thing in the world.

It is often said that the Protestant Reformation promoted liberty but it did so not because of any sympathy with liberty, for Protestantism was quite as intolerant as Catholicism, but because in the conflict of the sects respect for authority and the power of control were more and more undermined. Such religious liberty as we enjoy in modern times is due, not wholly to be sure but in no small part, to the fact that Christendom is divided into countless sects.

A break even more radical and far reaching in its consequences than that which took place at the Reformation followed less than a century later with the rise of Socinianism. The Protestant Reformation was in many respects a mediæval movement. If one is to draw a distinction at all between the Middle Ages and the modern age, the Reformation belongs on the other side of the line. Though it broke, as has been seen, with certain elements of the Catholic system, it retained among other things the traditional belief in the depravity and helplessness of the natural man, a belief upon which the whole Catholic system rests, for it

makes absolutely necessary a supernatural, God-given salvation and a supernatural God-given revelation. The Reformers retained the belief in man's depravity and helplessness, and with it much of the old system founded upon it. The recognition of the ability, and worth, and independence of the natural man which became increasingly common in the fifteenth century and whose growing prevalence has been taken by many to mark the principal contrast between the modern and the Middle Ages, was not shared by the Reformers. In this matter they are genuine mediævalists and even outdid their Catholic contemporaries in their mediævalism.

But there were certain of those who came under the influence of the Protestant Reformation who felt the control of the newer estimate of men. Many of them were Humanists before they were Protestants. To them the ability and worth and independence of the natural man was a principle of profound importance and because of that principle they rejected not only the old Catholic system but a considerable part of the Protestant system as well. They were represented in the early seventeenth century by the Socinians, later by the so-called rationalists, and in modern times particularly by the Unitarians. What they chiefly revolted against was not the doctrine of the Trinity or a particular interpretation of the person of

Christ, but the estimate of man and his needs traditional in Christianity since the first century.

Both Socinians and Unitarians were at first devout believers in the authority of the Bible and appealed to it in support of their positions, but their interpretation of man was such as in the end to make infallible authority in religion as unnecessary as supernatural grace, and thus their break with the past became far more complete than the break produced by Protestant Reformation. By them, as by multitudes in modern times in all our Protestant communions, the old Catholic and Protestant belief in infallible truth the acceptance of which is necessary to salvation, has been abandoned, whether for better or for worse, and in abandoning it they have removed one of the principal obstacles to Christian unity.

In conclusion I wish to make three remarks suggested by this historical sketch. First, it should be noticed that the causes leading to disunity are by no means identical with the causes that keep churches divided. The former might be wholly removed and yet reunion not be accomplished. After division has taken place all sorts of new situations emerge. Men become attached to the body within which they were born and to which they belong. Habits of mind, family affections, traditional loyalties, love of accustomed ways — many influences keep churches apart

which had nothing to do with parting them. Next week I see the subject is to be "Obstacles to Unity" and then the practical question will be discussed: What are the grounds of continuing disunity? Often they are quite other than the original grounds of schism.

Another remark I should like to make is this. As a rule the reason for disunion given by the churches themselves are far from accurate. Commonly in the creeds and other official documents of the various bodies concerned the situation is described in a way quite foreign to the real facts. Take for instance the illustration that I gave of the justification of the schism between East and West by an appeal to a verbal difference in their respective creeds. No one could get at the real cause of that schism by studying the official ecclesiastical documents. Similarly with the creeds produced as a result of the Reformation — the Augsburg Confession, the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, the Westminster Confession, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the like. None of them reveals the secret of the break except in part. They contain statements of the faith of the particular body which they represent and in that faith there is much, and it is well that there is, in which they all agree both old and new. And where their statements disagree, often there is least real difference. In fact almost the last

place to go for the reasons that have led to the divisions of Christendom is the confessions of faith of the various sects.

One more and final remark. Of all the causes that have led to disunity the belief in infallible truth, which one must know in order to be saved, has been the most potent. Whether it be a sound belief or a salutary belief it is not my place to discuss here. But I may be permitted to call attention to the fact that it has been without question the one most fruitful cause of division. If, as I have already said, the belief in infallible truth be conjoined to the belief in an infallible interpreter, it may not cause division, it may on the contrary bind men more closely together; but divorced therefrom it has proved the most prolific of all the causes of disunity. If the Church as a whole should ever abandon that belief, unity would be possible even with the widest diversity of opinion, or if the Church while retaining the belief could in some way secure universal agreement as to what the truth is, unity might equally be maintained. But so long as the belief persists without universal recognition of an infallible interpreter competent to enforce agreement, disunion I suppose may be expected in the future as in the past.

OBSTACLES IN THE WAY

By Bishop William Fraser McDowell, D.D.

I wish to say as a preliminary statement that this particular subject in the list is assigned to me and not exactly chosen by me. I do not say that to indicate that I would have preferred some other subject but only to indicate how it chances that I am discussing this particular one.

I cheerfully accept the subject with all of its limitations, though I speak under the limitation of not having heard any other addresses and probably not being able to hear any of those that shall follow.

I ought to say also I think that the subject itself, Obstacles in the Way, does not lend itself to a large warmth of speech. I can understand that placing the obstacles for an obstacle race, such as athletic meets sometimes have, might be interesting. I can easily understand that running a race and overcoming the obstacles would be perfectly thrilling, but making a card catalogue of obstacles would seem to me rather dull. Card cataloguing obstacles is pretty nearly what I am asked to do, for, you will observe, that I am not asked to discuss their removal or the way to over-

come them. I would like to say also in a preliminary way that one speaking upon obstacles is always liable to be understood either as being in favor of them, or having created them or as approving them. And if with any degree of vividness one describes the difficulties in the way of Christian approach he is quite likely to be understood as having given assent to these difficulties and as having regarded them as very good things upon the whole.

Of course you will not understand any such thing as that. You will understand that I did not create these difficulties and I hope you will understand that I do not approve them. And you will also understand that any list, however full and careful, that any one person might make in half an hour's conversation upon this subject can be easily matched by another list just as long, just as important, and perhaps more important than the list he mentions. It is enough for what we have before us this afternoon if those things which I shall try to mention are really entitled to our consideration as standing in any genuine measure in the way of the desires of our hearts.

Now with these preliminary statements may I say first, that in my judgment there is the obstacle due to the lack of definition as to what we actually mean when we speak these magic and heart-warming words.

What is really aimed at? The people of the Churches hold their membership in the Christian Church in a form of church life. Christian Unity is an idea which has not yet taken an organic, visible, definite form. You cannot point any group of thoughtful people to the thing and say: "That is it." Just by way of illustration, let me read you these words from my very dear friend, Bishop Brent:

"If there is any one thing for which I have a passion, it is for the Unity of the Church in accordance with the mind of Christ. Just what outward form this Unity will take I do not know." Now this absence of the definition is one of the obstacles in the way of the thing itself. Take practically any town of five thousand people and under a perfect scheme of Christian Unity, what would be the practical outcome in the organized personal Christian life of that community? You understand that I do not mention this difficulty with approval. I mention it because it constitutes a real difficulty and an obstacle of a real sort in the minds of very thoughtful people.

What would be the practical form of Church life in such a town? What would be the form of the organized Church life? Under a perfect expression of Christian Unity in the given town, what would be the form of Christian belief in such a town? What would be the form of the

Christian worship in such a town? What would be the practical program of a united Church in such a town? Its program locally, its program in the large world?

Now what we have, we know reasonably well. We are usually pretty conscious of the faults of these particular organizations to which we belong. We are a little bit prone to imagine that our friends in other Churches have not the difficulties that we have. It is just as well that our difficulties appear to ourselves and do not appear so clearly to our neighbors, and that their difficulties appear to them and do not appear so clearly to us.

Take a concrete example of what I am trying to say as to this obstacle that lies in the absence of definition. For three years and a half, with forty-nine other men, I have been working upon the problem of making a form of union, actual organic union of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, to which I belong. These Churches separated in 1844, about the slavery question in one of the phases of that question that brought it into the General Conference of that year.

Now in these three years that we have been working together, earnestly, conscientiously, prayerfully, with an eager desire to unite these two kindred bodies that are supposed to have a

common historical origin, that have very similar forms of government, virtually the same articles of religion, and would be presumed to have as many points in common as it would be possible to find between any two churches, when we come to the final result of our deliberations, we find ourselves not nearly as zealous, for the definition that we have had to make, as we are for the end that we seek to reach.

Their Church, we know,— our Church, we know. In either of them many of us could be happy. In the Southern Church they are happy. In our Church we are as happy as we have a right to be. We are not too happy, but we are as happy as we have a right to be. But we are not at all sure in our minds that either of us would be happy in the new achievement, in the new adjustment which we have made or which we are trying to make.

Of course, the net result of that is that if this absence of a definite and clear understanding as to what Christian Unity actually means, is in any way tending to keep Christian Unity from coming, then by some process, we must arrive at some definition of it as will immediately commend it, as will fully commend it to all this immense variety of people whom we seek to make one, not in any flat formal way one, but virtually one in our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I would say that a second obstacle is due just to ecclesiastical inertia, to satisfaction with, to complacency in, the existing order. We do not like to disturb ourselves. We do not like to break up the order we are perfectly familiar with. We prefer to go on as we and our fathers have been accustomed to go. And we do not like to discredit what exists even for some ideal that may be reached.

It is easy for us to make flings at the order that now exists. The literature of the day and the public speech of the day are full of merry gibes at the infinite multitude of Christian bodies. And there is particular pathos expended upon the bewildered heathen who are obliged to distinguish between all the varieties of Christianity, and who cannot understand why there should be any varieties.

That does not seem to me to help. We do not arrive at the goal when we discredit the Christianity, the Churches, that are in order to arrive at something that we hope to see. The fate of Christianity is in the Churches of to-day. The achievements of Christianity are largely through the Churches of to-day and there ought to be a better way of overcoming this inertia and destroying this complacency in the interest of the better things that we really desire.

Then these criticisms have the tendency to make

people think meanly and unworthily of the only bodies that are now organized to represent Christianity.

I would say that a third obstacle is due to our real doubt, whether expressed or formed definitely, or lying unconsciously or sub-consciously underneath our whole thought of the matter, about the advantage of one great ecclesiastical Union. This runs back to the first obstacle.

We are not quite sure though that this would be desirable if possible. We are not quite sure but that perhaps parties would arise within such a body that would be just as bad as the denominations that now exist in the Church as a whole; and we are not at all sure that Jesus' prayer was a prayer for one common ecclesiastical body. He was the least ecclesiastical of persons. But this lies here as a real obstacle in the way. This is a widespread doubt, not perhaps a widespread conviction, but a widespread doubt.

There are feelings as a corollary to this that unless we can come together on the basis of absolute like-mindedness, that we would better not come together at all, but let each work out its own part of Christ's work in the world in its own fashion.

In the fourth place, there is the obstacle due to the lack of a large motive. I do not say that the large motive does not exist, but the large

motive does not always prevail in the discussion. There is a difference between good motives and large ones. The alphabet of the matter of motives is that motives must be pure. Probably the motives for Christian Unity are clear and pure and transparent.

I cannot personally see that any one who is sincerely desiring to promote this great end is desiring to promote it for any unworthy motive. If any unworthy motive should be discovered anywhere, of course that would promptly destroy all possibility of coöperation and fellowship. But while it is true that the very beginning of the matter of motives is the item of purity, in matters like this, the essential quality of a motive is the quality of size.

And you cannot float a great enterprise like this any more than you can float any other great enterprise in the world upon a small motive, no matter how pure that motive may be. I suppose the dewdrop would be probably as pure as the ocean but the dewdrop is a pretty small matter as compared with the ocean.

It takes an ocean to float the world's navies. You remember some years ago when Mr. Twain was discussing the need of a new American Navy, he said: "All we need for the new American Navy is the proper number of the right kind of ships and the proper number of the right kind of

men to man them," and then he added dryly: "We have the water."

Now Christian Unity will not float simply upon the desire to reduce expenses, for it would be a means of grace to many Christians or to many Church members whom I know not to have the expenses reduced in their behalf but to have them increased. The motive of simply cutting down certain overlapping items is not quite a sufficient motive to carry a great enterprise like this.

The motive for the unity of the Christian Churches must have size enough to carry it, size enough to carry it over obstacles that are in the way, size enough to carry it in the long years in which the Christian Church will serve its Master and Lord.

Ask yourselves these questions: Can a united Church find its mind and the mind of Christ better than a divided Church? And the answer is not in doubt.

Can a united Church find its voice and utter the voice of Christ better than a broken and dismembered Church? And the answer is not in doubt.

Can one Church, one in its passion, one in its spirit, one in its devotion, one in its opposition to all evil, one in its consecration to all good, be used by Christ, the head of the Church, in the world's movements more effectually than can

the broken and dismembered portions of such Church? The answer is not in doubt.

The motive therefore that is small constitutes an obstacle to the result which is large and by some process the motive must be enlarged as well as purified.

There is a fifth obstacle due to the lack of a satisfactory plan or method, which is a purely practical matter. I was very much interested in what Dr. Merrill, my very dear friend, said. There are those who have a perfectly easy adjustment for all these things. They quote with immense approval certain historic sentences and certain striking illustrations.

They repeat: "The way to resume is to resume," as if that covered it. Why the process of resumption was one of the most difficult, complicated, detailed and practical processes that the Republic ever had to deal with in its management of its finances. "The way to be one is to be one. Surely! And the way to be one is a matter that involves all the good sense, all the patience, all the wisdom and all the fine talking back and forth, what men in a worthy way would call "ironing out the difficulties."

It involves all of that and until you find a way through all of these difficulties, you have not invented a satisfactory method. Now just to show you what I have in my mind on this point I am

going to read you a word. One way to find the obstacles is to examine any plan that has been submitted for the outcome that we seek.

Here is the Appendix to the Lambeth Quadrilateral, and then the first Interim statement touching this matter made by the Joint Committee of the Anglicans and Non-Conformists.

First, there is a fine statement of agreement of matters of faith. It is a beautiful statement, and then there is a beautiful statement of agreement on matters relating to order.

Then this, solemnly signed by half a dozen of the leading names of Great Britain: "a statement of the differences in relation to matters of order which require further study and discussion."

"Fidelity to our convictions and sincerity in their expression compel us to recognize that there still remain differences in respect of these matters.

"(1) As regards the nature of this visible society, how far it involves uniformity or allows variety in polity, creed, and worship.

"(2) As regards the Sacrament — the conditions, objective and subjective, in their ministration and reception and on which their validity depends.

"(3) As regards the ministry — whether it derives its authority through an Episcopal or Presbyterian succession or through the unity of believers or by a combination of those."

Now you see at a glance that this purely practical question runs into the creed, polity, orders, sacraments and ministry. It is a question that just cannot be dismissed and waved aside. Nor let me say do we gain anything by regarding these matters and the emphasis upon them, as trifling and unimportant.

These convictions upon which the Churches have been built are convictions that have not been lightly arrived at. They are convictions that have not been adopted in any trifling spirit. When a great body looks upon a special feature of its practice as commanded and enjoined by the New Testament and by the example of Jesus Christ himself, no matter how far we may be from agreement with them in this conviction, every true man and woman will respect their conviction as a conviction and not ask them lightly to wave it aside.

And the same thing is true with reference to other matters. I am trying to say that there is a real obstacle that lies here, that lies in every practical plan for Christian Unity that has ever been proposed.

The hopeful thing is that in spite of these recognized difficulties and obstacles earnest men meet together with increasing regard for one another, with an increasing confidence in one another and with an increasing desire for closer fel-

lowship, with increasingly living approach to one another for the sake of the common end.

Now, finally, I name a sixth obstacle, knowing that there can be other six just as striking as these. This obstacle is due to the difficulty of reversing a historical process. It is not easy to reverse a historical process. I say again, using the illustration that I used earlier, that a part of the difficulty that we are finding in the effort to reach Unity between the two large branches of Methodism in this country, is due to the difficulty of reversing the historical processes. And when great bodies look back over their history and see how they came to be, when the Presbyterians consider how Presbyterianism made its mighty declaration in England, for example, and when other bodies consider how they happened to be historically, and start to reverse even ignore the historical processes that have led up to this hour, they find obstacles that are not easy to overcome. All that is serious. No part of it is quite so serious I think as the spectacle of a body that had a noble motive in its historical origin that is continuing to live upon a motive out of which the life has passed.

Now may I say this final word. I have named these half dozen obstacles. I have not named them at all as though in my judgment they could not be overcome. It does not quite constitute a

part of the discussion that I have accepted with its limitations for to-day, for me to add this word, but I could not quite leave the matter in this fashion as though for one instant I regarded it as impossible for Christ's Churches to be Christ's Church, possibly, visibly as well as really.

We shall find a better way. We shall find the way, the better method. We shall find the adequate motive. Increasingly we will put into Christ's hands the kind of Body he can use in the dismembered and broken world. For the only body as it seems to me that can bring peace and unity to a distracted and broken and dismembered world is that Body through which Christ utters himself in the world, that Body through which Christ works by the Holy Spirit in the world, that Body that is set to proclaim his message, that Body that has his redemptive passion and purpose, that Body which if it continue to be distracted and fevered and broken will be powerless in a distracted and fevered and broken world.

It is because of the passion of Christ for a Body that he can use that the subject is of such importance. It is because Christ is in his Church and in his Churches that the obstacles to Christ's purpose can be overcome.

UNITY IN THE MISSION FIELD

By Mr. Robert E. Speer, D.D.

INTRODUCTION

Any words of introduction that should attempt to touch upon the important and significant theme to which we are going to listen this afternoon, could only, I am sure, by their weakness, have the advantage of contrast to the words to which we shall listen. It is, of course, a commonplace utterance to those who are informed that foreign missions have not been an expense to the Church but by their reactions and their compensations they have brought back to the churches at home far more than has been expended upon them. This is true undoubtedly in the realm of coöperation, federation and unity. Indeed, I think it does not go beyond the truth to say that in a large measure, the work of coöperation and federation and unity at home is, in a large measure, a contribution to us from the foreign mission fields, wherein such earnestness and seriousness had begun before our churches at home had taken it seriously and earnestly. The speaker who speaks to us this afternoon has not only been, during the period of the War, the Chairman of the General

Wartime Commission of the Churches, instituted by the Federal Council of Churches, but he had an opportunity which he fulfilled in such a large measure, of leading everywhere our whole movement for federation and coöperation, so that at the present time we stand on a vantage ground which we did not have before the War, largely due to the effectiveenss and wisdom of his leadership. I take great pleasure in presenting Dr. Speer, who will speak to us on the subject of "Unity in the Mission Field," this afternoon.

Nowhere in the whole field of Christian fellowship and service have there been larger attainments of the spirit of coöperation and unity or larger embodiments of that spirit in actual endeavor than in the field of foreign missions. There are obvious considerations why this should be so. In the first place the magnitude and the urgency of the foreign mission task have demanded such use of our forces and our resources as would contribute most to the accomplishment of that undertaking. The evangelization of a thousand million men and women, that is, the communication of spiritual truth, the most difficult of all truth to communicate, to two-thirds of the human race, and not the communication of that truth alone; but the persuasion of men to bring their characters under its obedience, and the

pervasion of the whole life of mankind by the spirit and principles of the Christian faith, to do this not under one uniform set of conditions but in many climates, trying and difficult, in many languages, some of which contain no words in which these truths can be expressed, in which the vocabulary of the Gospel has to be created,— a task as great and difficult as this is no task to justify waste or duplication. As the late Bishop of London, said to my friend, Canon Gairdner, this undertaking is too colossal for any one branch of Christ's Church to think of undertaking alone. And even if many generations might wait for one branch of the Church to attain this task, the task will not wait for those many generations. These people are here now and they are entitled to know this truth and to be offered the faith and knowledge of the Lord. Great forces moreover, are moving all over the world to-day that will not delay for their die and stamp. The urgency of this task combined with the difficulty of it enjoin the co-operation and unity of all the forces engaged in it.

In the second place the elementary needs of the non-Christian people call for what is fundamental and essential and primary in our Christian Gospel. The great evils of the world are impurity and inequality and hopelessness. Men do not know the character of God and therefore they do not know the Christian ideal of purity. Men do not

know the love of God and therefore they have not entered into the Christian experience of Brotherhood. Men do not know the life of God and therefore they are hopeless regarding the present and the future alike. And these three needs, the life and the love and the truth of God, these are not the points on which we differ among ourselves. These great fundamental things of the Christian world are things on which we speak a common message.

In the third place the simplicity of the missionary aim itself makes possible and enjoins unity. The aim of the missionary enterprise is the naturalization of Christianity, in the national life of all the peoples to whom we go. It is not the extension to any of these peoples of something that has not itself commanded the full national life of our peoples of the West. I am a member of the Presbyterian Church but I have not the slightest zeal to have the Presbyterian Church extended throughout the length and breadth of the world. It seems to me of far more importance that the Christians of Japan, instead of allying themselves, some of them with the Presbyterian and some of them with the Methodist Church of America, rather should bind themselves together in one Christian Church of Japan. It may very well be that when these Christian Churches have once been set up they will divide. Nobody can guar-

antee their perpetual unity, but if they divide they will divide on issues of reality. They will not be perpetuating in these far off lands, the memory of divisions which have no rootage in their past history or in their national temper and character.

In the fourth place the very occidental character of our divisions makes it necessary to transport them to other lands. Our separations here have their history and their traditions, that are very dear to us and we do well, perhaps, to cherish them and to let them go slowly. But it is better, sooner or later, to let them go in the interest of something far richer and greater than they. Even so they belong to Western life. They do not belong to the life of the people of Africa or the people of Asia. I remember reading some time ago in a Methodist magazine published in China in the city of Shanghai, of a lament of some Methodist missionary that there was not a single volume of Methodist theology published in the Chinese language which was not deeply tinctured with Calvinism. When I read that, I was pleased and I hoped that there was no volume of Presbyterian theology which was not tinctured also with Arminianism. These are not Oriental names. John Calvin and Arminius and John Crosby and the rest have their place in the history of Christianity. Whatever has been learned from the past ought to be handed down to the Churches

that we are fostering in other lands but it ought not to divide them.

In the fifth place, one knows that the great body of our fundamental agreements furnishes a basis on which we can unite in the enterprise of the evangelization of the world. What we call the Apostles' Creed is the common possession of us all. We all believe in the Father Almighty, the Maker of Heaven and Earth. We all believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son, our Lord. We all believe in the Holy Spirit, in the one Bible, the one baptism, in one faith and in one salvation. We stand here on ground that represents the great central body of our Christian conviction adequate surely on which to build unitedly in these great areas of the non-Christian world.

I might add to these five considerations of which I have been speaking, all of which justify the greatest possible measure of coöperation and unity in our undertaking to evangelize the non-Christian world. But a second question lies just beyond this. What is the degree and measure and kind of Christian Coöperation and Unity for which these considerations call? They call, obviously, in the first place for that measure of coöperation and unity which will render impossible all rivalry and waste. Because all rivalry is disloyalty to Christ and all waste is disloyalty to the world. Rivalry and friction are disloyalty to

Christ because they argue a different spirit, inferior to his spirit of brotherhood and trust and love. And all waste is disloyalty to the world because it diminishes the extent to which the gospel could be spread, if it were not for waste and duplication and over-lapping. Obviously that measure of unity and coöperation is demanded which will prevent all waste and friction in this task.

In the second place, something more than that is demanded. That kind of Unity is called for which will not only prevent waste and friction but which will secure, in addition, coöperation and united action. It is not enough to say one to another: "Hands off." We need to say one to another, "Hands together." It is not enough for us to agree to differ. That kind of agreement does not fulfill all that the Christian spirit requires. We must agree not only to differ but to coöperate and to bend our energies unitedly to a great task too big for all of us, vastly too big for any one of us to try to undertake alone.

And not only must our Unity be these two things — a Unity that prevents all waste and friction, a Unity that secures coöperation efficiently, but it must be a Unity that will express fundamentally those spiritual values that we are trying to carry to the world. I believe myself in the kind of Unity for which our Lord prayed, as the

kind of Christian Unity needed in our approach to the non-Christian world. Our Lord prayed: "That they may be one as Thou and I art One." I hear sometimes that what we need is Unity and agreement that binds brothers together in a family. That would be a great attainment but our Lord prayed for something far better than that. He did not pray that we might be one as two brothers are one; he did not pray that we might be united in fraternal agreement and coöperation but prayed that we might be One as "Thou and I art One," "That they also may be One in Us." The Unity of the God-head was his ideal.

And I believe in this not only because that kind of Unity was the one for which our Lord prayed but because it is a condition of our adequate appeal to the non-Christian world. On no divisions of the Christian world or the Christian Church shall we convince the world of the truth of our message. Our Lord made his prayer for Unity in order that the world might believe that the Father had sent him, and that there was salvation in him for all mankind. And until we have a Oneness like that, our gospel will never have the fullness of that divine power which our Lord Himself said it would have only when at last His people had arrived at a Unity perfected into One as He and His Father were one.

I have spoken first of the considerations that

make it necessary that we should achieve Coöperation and Unity on the foreign mission field. I have spoken secondly of the kind of Coöperation and Unity for which it seems to me these considerations call.

I wish to speak of the measure in which Cooperation and Unity have been already achieved in the foreign missionary field, for there, more than in any other field of Christian endeavor and fellowship, have we made progress toward these goals. In the first place we have dispensed with the names that help to keep us asunder in the West. God be praised many of these names are incapable of translation into the languages of the non-Christian world. You cannot translate Presbyterian or Methodist or Protestant-Episcopal into Chinese. There are very few languages in the world in which you can find any terms that by any stretch of the imagination can be made the equivalent of these. Missionaries accordingly have devised terms and names that fit one body of Christians just as well as they fit any other body of Christians. And we have not only taken the names off our denominational organizations there but we have taken them off many forms of our effort. We have established schools and colleges and most of them bear no denominational name. They may bear the name of some Christian character but they very seldom bear any denomina-

tional name. We are doing our work in the great non-Christian field under the Christian name alone. There are fields like the Philippines where almost all of the Christian Churches came together and where they agreed on one single name by which they would call all of their organizations, the Church of Christ, perhaps, and then parenthetically at the end they would put in Presbyterian or Methodist. But the parenthesis has been happily dropping out here and there and only the Christian name stands out to view. We have carried the gospel of Christ and the Church of Christ out into the non-Christian world and a great many of those names we have left behind and having left the names behind, it has been easier to leave some of the things which the names connote behind and by which we are held apart.

In the second place, in the foreign mission field they have adopted the policy of wise distribution of the forces that were available for the missionary work. Men have seen the absurdity and wrong of crowding little groups of Christian workers into one single section while great areas went absolutely uncared for. And wise and sensible men, in whom the Christian spirit worked, have begun to apportion this task among themselves. The underlying principle was expressed in one of the deliverances of the Church of England, not long ago, in the Lambeth Conference of

1887: "That in the foreign mission field of the Church's work where signal spiritual blessings have attended the labor of Christian missionaries not connected with the Anglican community a special obligation has arisen to avoid, as far as possible without compromise of principle, whatever tends to prevent the due growth and manifestation of that 'Unity of the Spirit,' which should ever mark the Church of Christ." And there are very few missionaries now, who are not of the same mind with Alexander Duff, who said that he would as soon leap into the Ganges as take one step to entice a Christian believer away from another Christian body or to do work that fell in the natural sphere and was the duty of any other Christian organization.

Here in this city long years ago, the principle was laid down on the occasion of Alexander Duff's visit, long since forgotten, but living in the memory for generations of those who heard him. I have talked with old men, long since dead, who attended that meeting held on the occasion of Alexander Duff's visit and who voted for the resolutions that were adopted then:

"RESOLVED, That considering the vast extent of the yet unevangelized world of heathenism, and the limited means of evangelization at the disposal of the existing evangelical churches or societies, it would be very desirable that with the

exception of great centers, such as the capitals of powerful kingdoms, an efficient pre-occupancy of any particular portion of the heathen field by any evangelical church or society, should be respected by others and left in their undisturbed possession."

It was in accordance with these principles that the Mexico missionaries some years ago after the revolution decided not to go back to their old methods but that they would see that the whole country was apportioned so that great areas were no longer neglected as they had been by the congesting of forces in certain areas and leaving others untouched. And now a map of Mexico may be presented showing that whole country portioned out, not with the idea of exclusion but on the principle of taking care of the whole task that must be done, and with the exception of two Christian bodies, which retain still their claim of right to leap over all these boundaries and go anywhere, all the rest of the Christian organizations are now doing their best to see that the whole of Mexico is properly taken care of. That is the second great achievement in the foreign mission field.

In the third place, the foreign mission work has led all other Christian activities in the way it has developed confidence and coöperation among all the forces engaged in it. Here in New York City, we began thirty years ago an annual confer-

ence of all the foreign missionary boards of the United States and Canada. It has been held annually ever since, and it has enabled the missionary agencies in the United States and Canada to approach their task with a common body of principles and with an almost common body of resources. In almost every mission field now agencies of the same kind have been developed, agencies of coöperation and confidence. In India the Anglican Church has been foremost in the great movement that has correlated the forces of India. And all of these bodies, except the Roman communion, are correlating their purposes and laying out their plans not in isolation but in common conference and brotherly accord.

In the fourth place, there has been in the mission field for a hundred years now such a volume of united prayer ascending from men and women as has arisen from no other section of the Christian Church. What we call the Week of Prayer, long since diverted to other purposes, sprang out of the missions in India, and was designed by these missions to rally the whole Christian Church to pray for the evangelization of the non-Christian world. To-day I will venture to assert there are more foreign missionaries united in their prayer than any other class of Christians in the world.

In the fifth place, there have been achievements

in actual Unity which have far transcended anything that we have won as yet in any other areas of the Church's service. We see it in the united institutions. I could name scores of union colleges and theological seminaries and hospitals and institutions of every kind. The day has gone by when any separate communion undertakes any longer to build up alone a great educational institution of higher learning on the mission field. We have realized that there is nothing in truth that can be sectarian, that the great body of truth is common truth and that we should unite in undertaking higher educational work. In building a missionary university from two to ten different organizations will often unite. Further all the medical missionaries in China have gathered in one medical association, and all the missionaries in educational work gathered in one educational association. And we have gone far beyond this. One hears the question raised now and then as to whether our denominational personalities are ever to be merged with others. It is being done all over the world to-day. There is scarcely a mission field where there is not an example of this. Denominations separate in the West are united in the East. In the East, in Japan, all the Episcopal Churches have united, likewise the Methodist, and more than thirty years ago, all the Presbyterian and

Reformed bodies, seven of them, still apart in the United States, united into one body. In China to-day the Presbyterian and the Reformed Churches are one, and the Congregationalists are uniting with them, no matter what nation they came from. All over the world we are witnessing the actual melting together of denominations. The missionaries are not afraid to put their ideals into words. Here is the resolution of the great Missionary Conference of Japan in 1900, adopted by the missionaries of all denominations gathered there. "This Conference of Missionaries, assembled in the City of Tokyo, proclaims its belief that all those who are one with Christ by faith are one body; and it calls upon all those who love the Lord Jesus and His Church in sincerity and truth, to pray and to labor for the full realization of such a corporate oneness as the Master Himself prayed for on that night in which He was betrayed." Here is the finding of the Centenary Conference in Shanghai. "That this Conference unanimously holds the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the supreme standard of faith and practice and holds firmly the primitive apostolic faith. Further, while acknowledging the Apostles' Creed, and the Nicene Creed as substantially expressing the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, the Conference does not adopt any creed as a basis of Church Unity, and leaves

confessional questions for further consideration; yet, in view of our knowledge of each other's doctrinal symbols, history, work, and character, we gladly recognize ourselves as already one body in Christ, teaching one way of eternal life, and calling men into one holy fellowship; and as one in regard to the great body of doctrine of the Christian faith; one in our teaching as to the love of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; in our testimony as to sin and salvation, and our homage to the Divine and Holy Redeemer of men; one in our call to the purity of the Christian life, and in our witness to the splendors of the Christian hope.

"We frankly recognize that we differ as to methods of administration and church government. But we unite in holding that these differences do not invalidate the assertion of our real Unity in our common witness to the Gospel of the grace of God.

"That in planting the Church of Christ on Chinese soil, we desire only to plant one church under the sole control of the Lord Jesus Christ, governed by the Word of the living God and led by His guiding Spirit. While freely communicating to this church the knowledge of truth, and the rich historical experience to which older churches have attained, we fully recognize the liberty in Christ of the churches in China planted

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by means of the missions and churches which we represent, in so far as these churches are, by maturity of Christian character and experience, fitted to exercise it; and we desire to commit them in faith and hope to the continued safe keeping of their Lord, when the time shall arrive, which we eagerly anticipate, when they shall pass beyond our guidance and control."

I have now dealt with five regards in which the foreign mission work has gone in advance of us and has achieved already what we pray and long for here at home. And experience in the foreign mission field has taught us certain great and urgent lessons.

For one thing it has shown us the possibility of Coöperation and Unity. We ask whether this thing can be done. It has been done far and wide throughout the mission field to-day. When we ask whether certain problems can be solved our answer is they have been solved and they have been solved under greater difficulties than we encounter here. Here in America we have the Presbyterian Church split into two, over issues that burst forth in the Civil War. We have not been able to re-unite those two sections of the Presbyterian Church. There is not a single non-Christian land where we are at work together where they are not united. I do not see why if Northern and Southern Presbyterians can unite

in the atmosphere of Heathenism they can't unite in a Christian land. Not only have we been shown the possibility, we have been shown the duty. If it is our duty to draw together in the face of these problems that confront us in the foreign mission field, is there any less duty before the problems that confront us here in America? For where are the problems of the Christian Church more urgent than here in our own land? Every consideration that argues for Unity in India or China argues for Unity here in America. We have no small portion of the foreign mission problem to solve right here on this island, and if Unity is essential to its solution ten thousand miles away Unity is essential to its solution here.

And not only do foreign missions show us the possibility and duty of Unity but they remind us of the method. They show us for one thing, the solidarity of a common task and a great danger. We used to think that the common task had a great cementing power. We realize now that there is nothing like a common danger to combine men together. We have got our common task still just as great as we had it four or five years ago. Only the shadow of Germany has gone by. And it is perfectly obvious that a common conviction cannot do what a common peril can. But we have still a common task and a common duty and a common peril. An idolatrous world is not

nearly so great a peril as a world that has thrown its idols away and believes in no God at all. We are facing a vastly more perilous world than the old world of one hundred years ago, a pagan world with its old evils and sicknesses, all its own economic problems of poverty and neglect, with our economic problems flung in upon them. Let any one go out and listen to the whir of the spindles to-night in Osaka, let him go up and down those long rows of mills in Shanghai and hear the thunder of the great looms; and go in and look at the lives being fed into those spindles and woven into those looms, and he will realize that the world has far more perils and burdens to-day than it had in the old days gone by. The case that Mr. Lowes Dickinson made out for the ancient Chinese civilization is a case that cannot be laughed away. There is too much that is sad and tragic about it. We have got all that problem in front of us. We cannot divide in the face of a task like that or in the face of a peril so great.

And not only have we been shown how a great task and peril can unite, but our experience has revealed the power of fellowship in serving, to unite men in spite of their intellectual disagreement and their divergent temperaments. After all, one wonders whether we have diagnosed correctly the real causes of our continued separation. One wonders whether it is doctrine or faith that

divides, or whether, after all, a great deal more of division does not spring from property and temperament, and that if only we could deal with property and temperament we could not take care of the questions of polity and creed. Human friendliness is a great unifier. Bishop Boone used to take all the newcomers in Shanghai into his home. There were times when many denominations of missionary slept together under his roof.

And foreign missions also have shown the method of Unity which is to be found not in detailed comparison but on the principle of transcendence, a larger principle than any that controls us now, that will enable us to see things in a conspective in which we can not see them now.

And not only are we to-day learning from foreign missions the methods by which Unity can be achieved but we ought to learn and practice these lessons now. Shall not the horrors of the discord and the alienation and the disunity, out of which we have not emerged, make us ashamed of our divergence? The one great need of the world to-day is Unity. The central principle of Christianity is Unity. The fundamental element of all life is Unity. How can we, in the Christian Church, obscure or qualify that principle by our divisions? We have learned the peril of conscientiousness. No man is justified in any course of action merely because he can conscientiously

take it. Germany was just as conscientious as we. "The day will come," said our Lord, "when those who will kill you will think that they do service unto God." Does conscientious murder make a man innocent? We have hidden behind our conscientiousness too long. We must beware of letting conscientiousness harden us to the risk of missing truth.

And to-day as never before Unity is of such importance as to demand any necessary sacrifice, such sacrifices as men have never been willing to make before. And I set foremost among those sacrifices our false loyalty to the past. What is loyalty to the past? Loyalty to the past does not consist in trying to stay within it. Loyalty to the past consists in trying to rise above it. The past that did not prepare for a better future is an unfulfilled past. Truth that is truth opens the gates to larger truth. And those men are faithful to what lies behind them, who say to the past, "I see thy meaning. Thy meaning was that greater things were to be made possible by thee and I am loyal to thee only when I heed thy voice and go on to those greater and richer things." True loyalty does not consist in holding fast to an unchanged and unchangeable order that has been. It consists in standing faithfully upon the foundations that have been laid and opening ourselves to all the new light and truth and guidance which

God is waiting to give to the Church, if, like the path of the just, the Church is not a stagnant station but a golden way that grows brighter and brighter to the fullness of the day that has not yet been, but that may yet be.

THE MIND OF THE MASTER

By the Reverend Henry Sloane Coffin, D.D.

INTRODUCTION

You will share my regret that the Bishop of the Diocese was hindered from having the privilege accorded him this afternoon by a severe cold. I regret it all the more for his sake and for yours because he shares with you the understanding of the supreme importance of the matter that brings you together. No doubt the most significant and useful means for helping God's people to keep away from further sin is that the matter of Christian Unity might be talked about, that people realize the horrible loss that comes to humanity through the discord of the Body of Christ.

Public opinion must be formed by people who can discriminate and who pray to God. The public opinion of the Church must be at one, in accord, so that or before all men can understand why these divisions in the family of our Father in Heaven are only expressions of our self-will. Nor will men be able to find a means by which their evil may be overcome, until it is a matter of common interest among God's people.

Therefore, I can think of nothing more valuable for the community at large than such a gathering as this and it is specially timely on account of the conditions in which we are living. Why is it that no one in our public life or in economic matters seems to have any convictions any more? Why is it that self-interest and self-seeking have suddenly come to have the appearance of being the only driving powers in human relations? Is it not because our children have been left without any other help than their teacher's influence to have implanted in them the living principles upon which human liberty must depend for its survival? Christianity, the knowledge and fear of God, must go back again among the little children and grow with them in their life, compelling their thought, before we can have a generation who like our fathers rested all they had in the institutions that they builded because they knew these were pleasing to God.

For our nation's sake, it is well for such a meeting as this to be held that right public opinion may be established among us. It is a special pleasure to me that I should have been called to represent the Bishop of the Diocese on the day when the supreme view of the whole matter is to be discussed — The Mind of the Master. The speaker you need not have introduced to you. You will follow him in his thought and when we separate it

will be with renewed and more clean-cut convictions that if the Mind of the Master can drive us, our problem will be quickly solved. I have the pleasure of introducing to you to-day Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin who will speak on the Mind of the Master.

Bishop, Ladies and Gentlemen: It is a great pleasure to speak with such a chairman on such a theme because I think if I sat down with the Bishop and listened to his view of the Church he and I would be of one communion within fifteen minutes. The theme assigned to me to-day is "The Mind of the Master." It suggests first the thought concerning his Church held by the Jesus of history and when one discusses that historic question there are two things that always must be borne in mind. One is our Lord's relation to the Jewish Church. Here was a great historic institution in which he was born, in whose heritage his own faith had its origin, by whose worship that faith was developed and through whose synagogues he found the readiest outlet for the message he had to tell. There does not seem to be any indication that Jesus contemplated breaking with the Jewish Church and setting up a separate institution. He gathered about him a group of men who shaped his faith and his purpose and to whom he opened his heart and mind

and whom he bound himself with ties of peculiar loyalty. A group consciousness naturally arose so that they spoke of persons " of us " and " not of us." And to that little group on the eve of his Crucifixion our Lord gave the symbolic rite, a symbol of their fellowship, fighting fellowship, a nourishing fellowship with Him and with one another in Him.

But even after his ascension that group did not feel that they had been set apart as a separate institution. They worshiped in the Jewish temple, kept the Jewish feasts, lived as Jews with the hope of winning the Jewish Church to the cause of Jesus.

The second consideration that must always be borne in mind is Jesus' outlook upon the future and here of course one speaks with diffidence in view of differences of opinion amongst scholars. But it seems fairly plain that in the earliest narratives the near end of the age was anticipated. The Son of Man was to return in power and to gather in a day upon the earth. And with that on the horizon, it was not natural that our Lord should think very much about an institution which was to carry on his work, but the centuries have rolled by and the catastrophe which the early Church looked for, the catastrophic ending of the world, has not come to pass. What our Lord did was not to found an institution but to gather

this group together, to fill them with His mind, to breathe upon them His Spirit, the Spirit of His Father, the living God, and to leave them bound in the Unity of the Spirit in loyalty to Himself.

In the narrative of the history of the early Church in the Book of the Acts, you recall that it is said that the group of Christians, not yet called Christians, group of disciples of Jesus, continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and in, not as our version renders it "in fellowship" because the best text in the Greek has a definite article, "*the* fellowship" and possibly we may say that the earliest name given to the Christian Church was "The Fellowship," and all that it recorded concerning the life in Jerusalem seems designed to accentuate and inspire and increase that sense of fellowship. Common prayer, common effort, even a common sharing of goods so that brotherhood was embodied economically as well as along other lines and then in the symbolic rite of the breaking of the bread. So that the four evangels seem to be natural in the line that the Master, as we get it from the Synoptists and in the Book of the Acts, prays on the eve of his departure: "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them." What was the glory which God has given Him? The glory of service,

devotion to others. "The glory Thou hast given Me, I have given them, that they may be One as we are One." Fellowship, the main idea of the Church, "The Fellowship." And when one turns to the Epistles of St. Paul and studies the Apostle's thought, that idea of fellowship seems to be uppermost in his mind. You recall how he protested against those that took party names saying: "I am of Paul," "I am of Apollos," as that tended to break up the sense of corporate Oneness, dividing the fellowship. The sins which he spoke of most were the anti-social sins, envy, wrath, malice, and the like, the whole ideal being the ideal of fellowship. And he went further. There was always a danger of the Jewish section of the Church holding itself aloof from the Gentile section of the Church and the Apostle was quick to see how some practical demonstration of brotherhood would tend to bridge that chasm and so when poverty overtook the believers in Jerusalem, he took that great contribution from the Gentile people and sent it to the others. And this idea of fellowship was prominent in the teaching which he gave concerning the Lord's Supper. "The cup which we bless is it not a fellowship of the blood of Christ," participation in Christ and a fellowship with one another, participation in the redemptive blood of Christ shed at Calvary? "The bread which we break is it not a fellowship of the body of Christ?" And one of

the most emphatic commands that we should endeavor to keep is the Unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. And He of whom we are speaking was one who did not hesitate to say and He certainly would not have hesitated to say it in this connection: "We have the mind of Christ."

This is a glimpse into the past but a glimpse into the past with a view to the present institution to-day. The fortunate thing about the title which has been assigned me to-day is that it is not a theme which belongs only to the past. Jesus did not give his disciples a set of doctrines. He gave them a Spirit. And the mind of Christ is not a mind of one who lived and died centuries ago but the mind of our great contemporary. He who promised to be with his people always even unto the end of the world so that in each generation we look back only to get guidance of the historic mind and apply it to the situation in which we are found in our own generation.

There are four factors which it seems to me throw a good deal of light upon the actual situation of the hour. The first we may call scientific or historic. We are well aware that now, for half a century and more, earnest scholars have investigated the Bible, with the result that the Church of to-day which is at all abreast of the times looks upon the Scriptures with a different view from that entertained by our forefathers fifty or

one hundred years ago. Not that we prize the Scriptures less, not that we hear less authoritatively the voice of the Lord our God speaking from it, not that we find less readily the provisions of His grace for our souls in the Bible, but that we look upon the written word from a different angle. It used to be assumed that the Bible contained the law, that in that law, by taking a brief text here and there, one might construct the creed which was to be binding upon believers' thought for all time; that by a similar investigation of the polity of the Church of the first century, it was possible to construct the Constitution which the Spirit of God had laid down for the Church for all successive generations. To-day the Bible is to us a narrative of man's life with God. The inspiration is in the life rather than in the record of the life. God is to be found in the life that his people had one with another and with Him rather than in a certain set of texts pieced together. As a matter of fact scholars point out that there were diversities of doctrine in the early Church. To be sure all looked up to God as their Father, all bowed with adoring trust to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and all believed in the indwelling Spirit of God as their Sanctifier, all looked upon the cross of Christ as the great event in the past which mediated their redemption with the Lord their God.

All looked forward confidently to the triumph of Christ's kingdom and to their own endless life in the City of God. There is a great body of truth in the New Testament but certainly there were diversities of expression and no attempt was made to fasten upon the Church a uniform creed. Again with regard to the polity a scholar like Long points out that a number of the forms of organization of the day seemed to influence the forms of organization that we find in their organization. The village elder, the relationship of a Roman patron and his clients, the fraternities or guilds of the Roman world, the custom of the succession of the next of kin in the oriental family all suggest why James, the brother of our Lord, attained the position of eminence given him in the Church of Jerusalem. These and other forms seem to have influenced the Church of that day in the organization of their groups. The scholars are also pointing out to us, and this is of primary importance, that it is nowhere said in the New Testament that a particular form adopted by the believers in Philippi or by the believers in Jerusalem, was adopted by them with a view of having it continually practiced in precisely the form they used for successive generations. That was not in their minds. And there is no statement in the New Testament which binds us to-day to some particular form

which was congruous to the thought and customs of that day. So that historical research does a great deal to clear the ground. It points out the continuity of life that we share with the past. It emphasizes the fact that the Church has always been an organism rather than an organization, a growing body and therefore fixed forms, be they forms of doctrine or be they forms of polity, are not to be expected. A distinguished British thinker has said that the one immutable factor in our institutions is their mutability and that is true of the Church of Christ. So that our historical investigation clears the ground. It is not the question that Presbyterians and Episcopalians used to debate among themselves but the fact that the grounds upon which those controversies were conducted have been taken from under our feet. These questions are no longer relative in view of our scientific attitude as historians toward the Biblical Scriptures. And that is a significant factor to be borne in mind when one seeks the Mind of the Master for our day.

The second factor is social. The Protestants emphasized the individual's relation to God. That we do not like to surrender. But so long as religion was viewed mainly as an individual affair with his God, a small number of fellow believers was all that was necessary to enlarge a Christian's life and to stimulate him to love and good works.

He did not feel himself crippled and impoverished because he belonged to a diminutive sect.

To-day with the development of our social consciousness, that thing is impossible. To begin with we recognize that whatever religious life we possess to-day is not dropped upon us as a bolt from the blue. It is something which we owe to the generations before us and so we emphasize continuity with the past as our fathers did not. We feel ourselves in a true sense, no matter what label may be attached to us to-day, we feel ourselves heirs of the whole Church of all the yesterdays reaching back across the centuries to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And we emphasize that fact. We owe our faith to that succession of believing men and women who have passed down the spirit of God to us.

Again we feel our need of the whole Church of Jesus Christ to-day, if we are to embody in ourselves a rich, full, religious experience. We do not wish to cut off from the Spirit of God any body of believers. We want them one with us and ourselves one with them with a sense of corporate solidarity, so that we may give to them whatever good comes to us and take from them whatever good God has bestowed upon them. We feel that we need the whole Church to-day for our life with God and we feel that they too need us.

And, further, a diminutive sect will not accomplish the purposes that we have in mind. So long as Christians view the main purpose of life as a pilgrimage from the city of destruction to the Celestial City, a small number of comrades is enough. But, when he looks out upon the world and believes that God has laid upon his soul the duty of Christianizing a New York, a China, a world, then this task is obviously impossible for any small group. It would be out of the question to Presbyterianize New York or to Episcopalianize China. We simply need the entire force of Jesus Christ linked together for the achievement of the Kingdom of God, which is our aim to-day and that realization demands a fellowship, with an insistency that men of an earlier day did not feel.

The third factor we may call experimental. For a number of years, we in our Protestant communions have had very close fellowship in various inter-denominational agencies in the common planning of our missionary enterprises and in just such meetings as we are engaged in this afternoon. We know each other as we did not know each other before. The result is that our feelings have undergone a profound change. Furthermore the war, with the pressure it exerted upon us, compelled closer unity. We have had experimentally to live together and we have discovered

that we are not as different as we thought each other. I have just come from a week of special services in an Episcopal Church. I think this is the fourth or fifth time I have spent with that Congregation, worshiping with them day after day. I have not discovered one thing that was the least bit different from the method to which I am accustomed. There were slight differences in form. I preach in a black robe and they preach in a white robe and other things trivial but all the other fundamental things, all the other fundamental aspirations, all the great work of the Church, was identical. We must recognize that identity to-day underlying our superficial and apparent differences. Further when you come to study the different communions, you will discover that under different labels you have the same thing.

Go into a Church which emphasizes independence as our Baptist brothers do and you discover some man exercising the same authority exercised by a diocesan bishop. He may not have the name but the fact is there. We have men exercising quite extensive powers in Churches like the Presbyterian. That fact is not the important thing. The fact is that that function is filled by a certain individual who has been raised up by the Spirit of God under certain circumstances for that task.

Or take two communions as far apart as the Roman Catholic and the Friends. In the former, you have a non-participating congregation, sitting by in silence while a dramatic act is being performed before them. In the Friends you have a congregation sitting equally silent, with no apparent participation and although the dramatic action is not performed before their eyes, in the quiet the most momentous spiritual transactions are perceived by the eye of the soul so that those coming forth from the mass and those coming forth from the Friends' meeting will have experienced very similar forms of fellowship with the living God to the nourishment and refreshment and inspiration of their souls. So that experimentally, as we live together and work together, we discover under divers labels that this religious life of ours is so alike that it must take to itself a body of its own, which shall resemble that body as it expresses itself in some other communion.

And the fourth reason we may label practical. As a matter of fact to-day we know perfectly well, those of us who are the leaders in our Churches, that when we come before an audience and plead for something, that the denominational appeal is no longer persuasive, to plead for a thing from the point of view of denominational loyalty is no longer the convincing appeal that it was twenty-five or fifty years ago. We have always to say to

our people: "This is a part of the great common task before us," before they rise to it with any enthusiasm.

Further practically we discover that in our present isolation we are not able to achieve the ethical ideals which as Christians we wish to achieve. To be specific take the question of marriage and divorce. Of what use is it for one communion to set up a particular standard and strive to live up to it if other communions in the same locality are not attempting to make that standard authoritative for them? A couple come to you and you refuse to marry them because they do not come up to the particular requirements that your communion has laid down. They go around the corner and another clergyman marries them. So that the Church to-day cannot hold up authoritatively before the community this ethical ideal of the home. I am not discussing whether one or the other ideal should be adopted. I am merely pointing out the fact that in our present condition, you cannot make any one of these ideals recognized in the community, because certain parts of the Church snap their fingers at the ideal set up by some other part of the Church. And when we come to discuss a big issue of the day, when we come to discuss international agreement, when we come to discuss economic morality, we should be able to hold our ideals in common with the great

body of Christians and say: "By these ideals we are prepared to live and if need be, die."

I think, Bishop Lloyd, you remember that great council in Edinburgh in 1910. I happened to have been a member of that conference called to discuss the foreign missionary problem throughout the world. And in the dark days of the war, I used to think: "Would that the so-called heathen for whom that conference was held could rise up and bid us come together again and with the same prayer, the same consecration, settle among ourselves what was Christian and what was un-Christian in the relationship of a more advanced nation to a weaker people; what was Christian and what was non-Christian in matters of national defense, armaments and the like; what was Christian and what was non-Christian in regard to the control of commerce, markets, operations and so forth. These are the questions that plunged the world into war. We are realizing to-day that no merely national grouping of Christians is sufficient. The Protestant Reformation did a great many marvelous things for which we are lastingly thankful but it was guilty of one gross error when it broke up the international, or if I may use the word supernational, organization of the Christian Church. Little groups of internationally minded socialists tried to get together during the War to act as centers of peace and reconciliation. The

Church of Jesus Christ to which had been given the message of reconciliation was paralyzed. OurRoman brethren, while they sacrificed much, kept at least in name, the supernational organization and though they did not succeed in doing very much for the record of the Papacy during the war, still there was a meeting place, where representatives of the belligerents could see each other, where the Pope could intervene as he is said to have intervened by Cardinal Mercier on behalf of the people of Belgium and certainly to-day we feel that if the world is to be held together, the Christian Church must be grouped supernationally, our fellowship must be realized in some tangible form. Take those four factors, historical — clearing the ground; social — increasing the need; experimental — removing the terrors due to misunderstanding and practically forcing the necessity of some organization of the fellowship for constructive service upon us; and are not these factors in the mind of the Master for our own day?

It is said by some that it would be an unwise thing to unite the Protestant communions because that would leave aside the Roman, the Eastern and non-Evangelical Churches. Let us look at these three things for a moment. I think we all believe that we cannot regard our union of the Christian Church as satisfactory if we do not

include the Church of Rome. But shall we be further from Rome or Rome further from us, if we in the Protestant communions manage to group ourselves in some functioning Unity? I do not think we shall. With regard to the Eastern Churches, who knows what the condition of the Church is in Russia and how that Church will emerge from these cataclysmical days. We see already signs of change, of awakening in the Eastern Church, the Balkans, out through Syria, in the near East, and surely we shall not be further removed from our Eastern brethren if we take down the endless divisions whch exist among ourselves and present a well-united front than we now do to the real foe — selfishness, injustice, wrong in the world.

And with regard to our non-Evangelical brethren, while we admire their genuine Christianity, at the present time, it does not seem to be a feasible thing to bind them into a practical Unity with ourselves without sacrificing larger sections of the Evangelical Christians to-day so that for the time being no doubt we shall have to go on without them and our Union will not remove us further from them nor them further from us.

So that there seems to be no reason why we should hold ourselves back. With regard to the present situation, let us be thankful for movements already on foot. Let us be thankful for

the work done by the Federal Council of the Churches, let us be grateful for this movement at present underway, the Inter-Church Movement that is trying to bind us together as partners in a common task. Let us welcome with cordiality what seems to me far more reaching a movement, that resulting in the conference recently held with representatives of most of our Protestant communions in our country, which has suggested the name The United Church of America, and a council over these communions which will have certain duties laid upon it to unify the aggressive work of the churches and where possible to bring about economy and coöperation where there has been needless overlapping.

But all these together hardly satisfy the aspirations of our souls. Our aspirations as we look back upon the mind of Jesus Christ cannot be for anything less than fellowship, fellowship in teaching, fellowship in action, fellowship in the breaking of bread and in prayers. And until we can have that further fellowship, we cannot hope to realize, as we wish to realize, the corporate solidarity as the body of Jesus Christ.

It would be presumptuous for me even to suggest steps in the right direction. I am glad that the speaker next week has for his subject: "The Next Step." But certainly, if one interprets the mind of Christ at all correctly, the next step is

not something to be deferred till some remote to-morrow, but a step which ought to be taken now.

Historical investigation — clearing the way, the social conscience comes in with its demand for fellowship, experience with one another has broken down suspicion, misunderstanding, made it easy for us to work together, soul with soul, and practical — the task before us, the urgent necessities of the world cry out for this Unity.

Let me leave you with a single picture. It is not a great work of art. It hangs up here on the wall of our Metropolitan Museum, representing the crusaders in sight of the Holy City. Down in the corner of the canvas the artist has sketched the domes and flat roofs of Jerusalem. Up above the sky line the figure of Jesus Christ, not seated in kingly majesty and in majestic and commanding repose, but Jesus Christ sitting eager, with the print of the nails in his hands and feet inviting his people to go with him, and in the center of the canvas a great host of horsemen and footmen marching to make that City, now in the hands of the infidel, the City of the Living God. It cannot be done by a part of the host. It can scarcely be done by the whole host together.

And is that not the picture that concerns me to-day? The cities of men to be made the cities of God, binding us together in devotion, bidding us to go on that the body of Christ may be made

triumphant on the earth and we here feeling ourselves One, really One, longing for some practical outward manifestation of that Oneness that shall make us one effective host to take these cities and make Jesus Christ their King.

THE NEXT STEP

By the Rt. Rev. Ethelbert Talbot, D.D.

As it was not my privilege to hear the several addresses which have preceded this, I hope I may be pardoned if inadvertently I shall touch upon some of the same ground as that traversed by others.

It is at least suggestive that the title of this last address of the series assigned to me is the "Next Step," for that would seem to imply that we realize that the great objective for which we are all striving can only be reached by taking a step at a time.

In our consideration of the subject of Church Unity, in all of its phases, we have abundant reason for encouragement in the fact that never before, since division began, has there been such a deep and widespread and intelligent and above all, prayerful interest in it as now.

While nothing is gained by passing judgment upon those who were called to lead the Church in days gone by, and still less in stirring up the old controversies and fanning into flame the dying embers of post-reformation debates about forms and ceremonies, which now seem to us so trivial,

we must all in fairness admit that our Forefathers in our several Churches behaved in such a manner that they simply made division inevitable. In other words, the temper then was inflammatory, dangerous and angry. One can hardly be surprised that Episcopacy, for instance, was thoroughly despised by Non-conformists at that stormy period when it allowed itself to be identified with Royalty and especially when the crown of Royalty was worn by such a representative as King James. That Hampton Court Conference was a deplorable example of a lost opportunity. It was on that occasion that James exclaimed, "If you aim at a Scotch Presbytery, it agreeth as well with Monarchy as God and the Devil. Then Jack and Tom and Dick will meet and censure me and my council." The King's last words as he left the room, were ill-omened. "I will make them conform or I will harry them out of the land or else do worse." The King was speaking for the Bishops. The Episcopal Church in this country to-day still labors under the prejudice inherited from those stormy and unfortunate days when Bishops allowed themselves to be associated in the public mind with aristocracy and pride, with bigotry, intolerance and persecution. A similar spirit of angry and relentless disputation animated all the Churches at that time. None of us can claim immunity from it. It was in the air and

everywhere in evidence. Let us thank God that to-day all is different. As some one has said, the war has flung us all into a new world. Through what we love to think and believe has been the Divine leading, we have now been vouchsafed an atmosphere congenial, not to controversy, but to agreement.

Church Unity can never come until the spirit of Christian Unity has become so strong as to be irresistible. By Christian Unity we mean that strong bond of union between disciples of our Lord that enables us to recognize His claim upon our allegiance as absolutely preëminent. The very core of the heart of Christianity is love for Jesus Christ. In the past it has often been too true that we have been adherents of a system, lovers of an institution, devotees of our particular Church or Theological School of thought, members of a party, or believers in a religion primarily when we ought to be first of all, and perhaps in some ways last of all, lovers of a Person. That is, we have been wont to lay stress upon the things which divide, which we do not share with all Christians. Hence have followed disunion, strike, and all the unlovely sides of religion. Among the first disciples of Christ this was the one thing of which there was no doubt, namely the love for Christ. They, like ourselves, were people of entirely different temperaments and gifts, but they were all

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alike in this: each one could say from his soul, "Lord, Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee." More and more, I seem to see among Christians of to-day an emergence of that spirit. Devout men in increasing numbers are becoming weary of the futility of conflict, and are looking for some hope of a better understanding; they are sick of the party cries and shibboleths and longing for that wider fellowship which must ultimately unify the Church of Christ and make it effective in the discharge of its mission in the world. The love of Jesus Christ has accomplished this. It is a rediscovery of the great fundamental which is destined to be the breath of life to a divided Church and make brother grasp the hand of brother with a grip of good fellowship and mutual trust, and when that personal love for Christ has been perfected the pass-word for the regenerated Church which alone will be worthy of her will be, "Peace to all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

In addressing myself to the question of Church Unity, for whose favorable consideration such a congenial atmosphere has been, by the leading of the Holy Spirit created, will you permit me to say that in my humble judgment the "Next Step" is to endeavor to unite, so far as is possible, our various Evangelical Churches into which so much of

our American Christianity is divided, so as to form a visible Organic Union.

Towards the accomplishment of this object, two important beginnings have been made. I refer in the first place to the plan of union adopted early in February last, by the American Council of Churches, on the initiative of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. And secondly, to an "Approach towards Unity" now known as the Concordat, created by a joint conference between a group of distinguished Congregational brethren, and a similar group of members of the Episcopal Church. They are both confessedly simply steps in the direction of such an ideal Unity as that contemplated in the prayer of our Divine Lord. But they are both significant and full of promise if carried out and made effectual.

Let us consider briefly the claims of each of these movements.

At the Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church held in Columbus in May, 1918, a resolution was passed with great enthusiasm that a commission on Organic Union of the Evangelical Churches of America be at once appointed and instructed to hold as soon as practicable a conference to consider a plan or plans for such union, to which conference the vari-

ous Evangelical Churches should be cordially invited to send delegates. Such a conference was held in Philadelphia on the first week in December, 1918. Representatives of seventeen Churches responded to the invitation and were present at the conference. The spirit that prevailed was admirable. It was evident that a heartfelt longing for Unity moved all who took part in the proceedings.

It was unanimously agreed among us that the great world crisis through which we had passed had laid upon the Christian Church new obligations and duties which we may not disregard. The common ideals and dangers which have come to the front in the great War have developed many latent forces which we must be quick to conserve. Moreover it was thought that the unanimity with which our American people in the face of their many differing traditions of creed and practice were able to fuse themselves into one body for the common weal of the nation and the world may be regarded as a prophecy full of hope of what the Church might accomplish by coming into a like Unity in the interests of that great Kingdom so dear to the heart of our Master and His loyal disciples.

The mere fact that such a conference was called with such an object in view is profoundly significant of a decided change of attitude towards the

subject of Organic Union. The wide and cordial response to the call was likewise suggestive of progress towards the desired goal. Such a meeting with such response could not have been held even ten years ago.

It is even more worthy of note that the Conference also expressed its conviction that our Divine Master is now challenging His disciples to conquer the divisive elements which segregate us into various and sometimes conflicting bodies, and under the guidance of His spirit to bring the manifold treasures which have been gathered in our several histories and experiences to a common altar and there devote them to our Lord and His cause.

This Philadelphia Conference representing seventeen churches, which number has since been greatly increased, emphatically declared that it was plainly in accordance with the divine purpose and in harmony with the will of Christ that His Church should be one visible Body in order to bear witness to Him among men. It reminded us that in His last prayer the Savior asks that His disciples may all be One as He and His Father are One, that the world may believe that He was sent of God.

At our last meeting held only a few weeks ago, early in February, a plan of Union was adopted to be presented to the supreme governing bodies of

the several communions when they shall respectively meet. The following preamble and plan were agreed upon.

"Whereas, we desire to share, as a common heritage, the faith of the Christian Church, which has, from time to time, found expression in great historic statements; and,

"Whereas, we all share belief in God our Father; in Jesus Christ; His only Son, our Savior; in the Holy Spirit, our Guide and Comforter; in the Holy Catholic Church, through which God's eternal purpose of salvation is to be proclaimed and the Kingdom of God is to be realized on earth; in the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments, as containing God's revealed will, and in the life eternal; and,

"Whereas, having the same spirit and owning the same Lord, we none the less recognize diversity of gifts and ministrations for whose exercise due freedom must always be afforded in forms of worship and in modes of operation."

Plan:

Now we, the Churches, hereto assenting, do hereby agree to associate ourselves in a visible body to be known as the United Churches of America, for the furtherance of the redemptive work of Christ in the world.

"In the interest of the freedom of each and of the coöperation of all, each constituent Church

reserves the right to retain its credal statements, its form of government in the conduct of its own affairs, and its particular mode of worship.

"In taking this step, we look forward with confident hope to that complete Unity toward which we believe the Spirit of God is leading us. Once we shall have coöperated whole-heartedly in such visible body, in the holy activities of the work of the Church, we are persuaded that our differences will be minimized and our Union become more vital and effective.

"The United Churches of Christ in America shall act through a Council and through such executive and judicial commissions or administrative boards, working ad interim as such Council may from time to time appoint and ordain."

You will note that this organization does not claim to be the ideal plan of Organic Union which its constituent members have in view. It is only a "First Step" whose aim is to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding in which alone the visible Organic Unity aimed at can ever be realized. This movement, as will be readily seen, differs from the Federal Council, the Inter-Church World Movement, and all other similar organizations in that it has for its goal the visible Organic Unity of the several Churches into one body. It goes very much further in its object than mere federation. At the same time, it recog-

nizes the great advantage of federation in helping to generate the atmosphere of mutual understanding in which the final objective can alone be realized. Its aim will be to cultivate the most cordial relations with all movements making for a closer coöperation among Christian people in the redemptive work of Christ.

As one very important result of this movement, it is confidently hoped and believed that a number of Churches of like polity and forms of worship will gradually be merged into one communion, thus greatly lessening the number of separate Churches, and giving great relief from the economic waste and rivalry resulting from division in many towns and villages overburdened with far too many Churches. A number of these mergers as you know are now in the process of being formed.

We come now to consider what is known as the Concordat. Whether this proposed approach to Unity will work, whether it is practicable, whether it will be helpful or harmful in its practical effects, there is room indeed for wide differences of opinion among representatives of both Churches who are equally wise, equally good and equally loyal. The Concordat provides that in case a Congregationalist or any other non-episcopal minister applies to a bishop for episcopal ordination he shall satisfy the bishop that he holds the historic faith of the Church as contained in the Apostles' Creed

and the Nicene Creed, that he shall be confirmed, that he shall be ordained deacon and priest, that he shall thereafter use a prescribed form of words in celebrating the Holy Communion, and invariably use the elements of bread and wine in that Sacrament, and that he shall continue permanently in relation with the bishop and under his guidance and direction while at the same time remaining as pastor, at the request of his congregation, over his own people just as heretofore.

We cannot but regard it as very remarkable that the eminent and Christian brethren whose names are signed to this proposal are ready to assent to these conditions. Do we fully realize what it means? Never before have a group of representative Protestant ministers purely for the sake of the great cause of Unity been willing to go so far as this. Surely the step for them is a revolutionary one. It requires much grace and true religion for such men to be willing to take such a step. The question on the part of the Episcopal Church is, have we a right to ask more than this of those men, as a condition of Unity? That is the question which those who have been engaged in this important matter have had to ask themselves in the sight of God. Some of our people have objected to the proposal on the ground that although the minister thus applying will have been confirmed and ordained to the

priesthood, the people of his congregation will not have been required to be confirmed. While this might be regarded as unfortunate it is surely not an insuperable objection. Indeed as a matter of fact for one hundred years no one in the Episcopal Church, in this country, was confirmed because we had no bishops and yet the Church, though it suffered through this neglect, still survived. This was a case of emergency. So likewise the situation created by these proposals for the healing of the wounds in the Body of Christ may well be considered an emergency. No one claims that confirmation is a prerequisite to salvation. Confirmation will take care of itself, it is thought, in all probability when the plan becomes an accomplished fact and begins to function. At best both sides realize that it is only a temporary arrangement — an approach towards the full realization of Unity. The Congregationalists feel this quite as strongly as we do. Think what the situation will be. The minister will have been confirmed and ordained priest. His people will have formally assented to this. They and their minister will be in regular and stated relation with the bishop of the diocese. Unquestionably if the matter of confirmation be left to adjust itself many will desire naturally to receive that blessing.

It seems to me that if men are deeply and earnestly desirous of Unity, the principle of give

and take wherever no conviction is sacrificed on either side should prevail.

The meaning of the Concordat is not that either side expects to make Congregationalists or Methodists or Presbyterians into Episcopalians. Surely that is not what we mean by Unity. Rather we desire to see them, yes and to see ourselves also, lifted up and out of our present divisions and sectarianisms into the full life and fellowship of the Catholic Church of Scripture and history. Therefore the Congregationalists who accept this arrangement will not be technically in what is now known as the Episcopal Church. They will not be subject to the canon law of the Episcopal Church. They will have entire liberty as to the use of the Prayer Book, vestments, and ceremonies, and will probably not use the Prayer Book any more than they do at present; at any rate that will be entirely their own affair. But they will be without question in the full Communion and fellowship of the Holy Catholic Church of history and of the Creeds. They will hold the historic faith as therein set forth, they will accept the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, they will have the priesthood and the sacraments, and they will be in communion with a Catholic bishop and under his guidance and direction. In short, if carried out, this courageous step on the part of these congregations

may be an epoch-making one. It may prove to be the greatest practical step in the direction of Unity since disunity began.

The plan was presented at our late General Convention and initial action was taken in regard to it. The General Convention also provided a Joint Commission to which was referred the whole subject. Our Congregational brethren, on their part at their National Council, took corresponding action by appointing a commission to continue the conferences with our own commission. In a recent issue the "Congregationalist," published in Boston, referring to the action taken by our Convention said: "Our Council in response has appointed a similar commission. The joint commission has a right to ask for suspense of hasty criticism, for patient waiting, and for prayerful consideration and help. We should have the final conclusions of the commission before us before we make up our minds in regard to the price which evidently must be paid by both parties to such an agreement for manifest gains of brotherly coöperation and united witness."

Unquestionably there is abundant evidence that through the operation of the Holy Ghost the outcome of each of these important movements may prove to be most helpful. But just because there is such eager desire for some kind of Unity there is great danger that the Churches may commit the

fatal mistake of adopting some form of mere federation instead of securing a genuine and Organic Union. To be satisfied with any Concordat or system of working together while retaining the autonomy of existing independent Churches as a final objective, would be to delude ourselves with a superficial and temporary expedient. It would be a Unity like that of a rope of sand. No kind of Unity short of the ideal for which our blessed Lord prayed is worthy of our serious thought or effort. That Unity must come as a spiritual change and must be preceded by many gracious quickenings and impulses if it is to have any permanent value. It is not mechanical but vital. It cannot be through the Prussian method of conquest and submission. "The flower appears after the gentle rain and summer warmth have awakened the seed." It must be a Unity built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone. It must be rooted and grounded in our love for Him. It may be a Unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. It can never be adequately expressed simply in the coöperation of the Christian Churches for moral influence and social service, though such coöperation is altogether desirable and might well be carried much further than it is at present. But it cannot be too clearly understood that Organic Union can only be fully re-

alized through community of worship, faith and order, including above all other requirements common participation in the Lord's Supper. There must be some standardization of the Christian Ministry that inter-Communion may be fully realized. This by no means implies a dead uniformity, but would be quite compatible with a rich diversity in life and practice as to non-essentials.

Encouraged by such irenic spirit between the Churches as we now have, and having reached the point when we regard the visible Unity of the Body of Christ as the precious pearl of great price for which we are willing to sell all that is purely our own, and not a trust committed to our keeping by God, and thus purchase Unity at whatever cost or sacrifice of pride or prejudice, are we not now approaching the time when we shall be ready to seek the best way out of the tangle of the centuries? As Christian men shall we not soon be ready and prepared to face frankly and fearlessly the real issues and to solve the problem which in God's providence he has so plainly placed before us?

What is it now that divides the Churches? Largely it is a question not of faith but of order or church government. Thank God, that in the realm of faith there is little that need give us serious concern or longer keep us apart. On all the great fundamental verities of our holy reli-

gion, at least among the evangelical bodies into which American Christianity is divided there is substantial agreement.

Unity cannot be brought about by way of any compromise which is at the cost or sacrifice of conscientious convictions or by the surrender of any cherished principle. Nor can it be achieved by asking any communion to repudiate or disown its past but only by adopting some plan whereby each Church may have the privilege of contributing of the wealth distinctive of each to the common enrichment of the United Church, and this not by way of grudging concessions but of hearty and grateful acceptance of some well tried basis upon which Christian liberty can be reconciled by law. It goes without saying that in such a reunited Church the principle of democracy should be all pervasive; that kind of democracy which is animated not by a determination to possess every right which another has; but rather by a desire to insist that the other shall have whatever right we may possess. This spirit can only be vouchsafed us in answer to prayer that the great Head of the Church, our Divine Savior, will accomplish in, and through his humble servants, the fulfillment of His Holy Will.

THE END

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Study Number Five

CHRISTIAN UNITY FOUNDATION SERIES

THE CHRISTIAN UNITY FOUNDATION is a purely voluntary and unofficial organization. Its purpose is to promote Christian Unity by the method of Education, Research and Conference.

Ages in the past have emphasized the power of competition but to-day coöperation is the great ideal towards which all departments of human activity are tending. A growing sense of the evils involved in disunion is now apparent. Men and women of every religious name are realizing the wickedness and folly of the divisions and sub-divisions among those who call themselves Christians.

The CHRISTIAN UNITY FOUNDATION is a pioneer in the great field for affecting the union of the discordant churches of Christendom. Established in the early part of the year 1910 and incorporated under the State of New York July 18th of the same year, the Foundation has endeavored to do its work of reconciliation among Christians chiefly through "Education, Research and Conference." By such means proper explanations have been given of many misinterpretations and misunderstandings which have been the accidental causes of disunion, and are still hindrances in the way for all Christians to be one.

The *Foundation* believes in the "Grace of the Agreeing Mind" and in the second clause of its Articles of Incorporation thus states its purpose: "To promote

Christian Unity at home and throughout the world. To this end to gather and disseminate accurate information relative to the faith and works of all Christian bodies. To devise and suggest practical methods of coöperation substituting comity for rivalry in the propagation of the common faith. To bring together all who are laboring in the same field and this in the belief that full knowledge of one another will emphasize our actual membership in the one body of Christ and our common agreement in the essentials of faith."

In the fulfilment of such a purpose, the *Foundation* has successfully, with the help of its many friends in the great cause of Christian Unity, and with the kindly co-operation of the Reverend Doctor Merrill, pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, been enabled to present a course of lectures of great value. In order to reach "the greater public," these lectures are printed in book form under "STUDY NUMBER FIVE."

Christian Unity is indeed "The Problem" of the Twentieth Century. What is needed to-day is education, information, inspiration upon the meaning of Church Unity. We earnestly invite the reader to study and examine the following pages in the interest of the great task that is beforc all of us. It is for the people of the Church to work for unity, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Unity must come from the people to the leaders, from the lower to the higher, so that the Body itself may be made ready for the Master's use.

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